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'Forward with confidence'

Bush sworn in, vows to spread liberty worldwide



President Bush takes the oath of office from Chief Justice William Rehnquist, right, with first lady Laura Bush and his twin daughters, Barbara and Jenna, at his side Thursday at the U.S. Capitol. In background are Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., second from right, and Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., chairman of the congressional inaugural committee.

- Bush says U.S. freedom depends on freedom abroad **Pages 3, 4**
- Family, dignitaries surround president in inaugural images **Pages 4-5**
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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

O.J. Simpson's daughter: O.J. Simpson's 19-year-old daughter was arrested after she refused to stop yelling at officers in Miami who had been summoned because of a fight outside a basketball game involving her old prep school, police said.

Sydney Simpson was charged Saturday with resisting arrest without violence, punishable by up to a year in jail, and disorderly conduct, which carries a possible 60-day jail sentence.

Simpson yelled profanities at the officers called to Ransom Everglades School after a boys' varsity basketball game against Gulliver Prep, according to a Miami police report. While she was being taken into custody, she slapped another officer's hand, leading to the resisting arrest charge, the report said.

Oil-for-food scandal: An Iraqi-born American businessman accused of skimming money from the United Nations oil-for-food program has pleaded guilty to being an illegal agent of Saddam Hussein's government.

Samir A. Vincent, 64, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Annandale, Va., is the first person to be charged in the Justice Department's investigation of the program. He entered his plea Tuesday in New York.

Vincent received the rights to some 9 million barrels of oil and cash payments from Saddam's government in return for lobbying U.S. and U.N. officials on issues such as weakening of economic sanctions, the admission of arms inspectors and the oil-for-food program itself, prosecutors said.

Illegal immigrants smuggling: A federal judge Wednesday granted a delay in the Houston trial of a New York man accused of driving and abandoning a tractor-trailer in the nation's deadliest human smuggling attack.

Jury selection in the trial of Tyrone Williams was to begin Friday, but his attorney, Craig Washington, had sought a delay so he could appeal a ruling that allows prosecutors to withhold information on why Williams is the only one of 14 defendants facing the death penalty.

Prosecutors said they singled out Williams, who faces 58 counts of harboring and transporting illegal immigrants, because he alone had the power to release the people packed in his trailer. The failed smuggling attempt resulted in the deaths of 19 illegal immigrants in May 2003.

Iranian-American accused: A businessman suspected of supporting Iran's nuclear missile program accused federal prosecutors Wednesday of trumping up charges against him and ruining his reputation.

Mohammad Farahbakhsh, 43, an Iranian-born U.S. citizen, is being held in New Haven, Conn., on charges of illegally exporting temperature and pressure sensors to Iran. Prosecutors say he also did business with companies connected to the Iranian nuclear program. They plan to charge him with that next month.

The documents filed Wednesday are part of Farahbakhsh's effort to be released while he awaits trial.

Business

ImClone settlement: Sam Waksal, the imprisoned ImClone Systems Inc. founder at the center of an insider-trading scandal that ensnared Martha Stewart, and his lawyers have agreed to pay a total of some \$5 million to resolve civil charges in the case, regulators announced Wednesday.

Sam and Jack Waksal neither admitted nor denied wrongdoing in the settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Sam Waksal pleaded guilty in late 2002 to securities fraud for tipping his daughter, Aliza, to dump ImClone stock just before



Asian bird flu: Trinh Duc Ha removes from a truck Wednesday a chicken to sell at Hanoi's largest poultry market in Vietnam. Health experts are bracing for a repeat of last year's bird flu outbreak after six people died in Vietnam within three weeks and neighboring Thailand reported its first cases among poultry this year. Outbreaks among poultry have been reported nationwide in Vietnam, and health experts say the pattern looks similar to last year, when the virus spread rapidly just before the Lunar New Year holiday, or Tet.

The Food and Drug Administration publicly announced it was refusing to accept the company's application to market the colon cancer drug Erbitux. He is serving a seven-year, three-month sentence at a federal prison in Pennsylvania.

The now-imprisoned Stewart was convicted last March of lying to federal investigators about why she sold 3,928 shares of ImClone stock in December 2001.

Enron collapse: Enron Corp.'s top leaders will all be tried in Houston on criminal charges connected to the scandal-ridden company's 2001 collapse, a federal judge ruled Wednesday.

U.S. District Judge Jim Lake's decision denies claims from company founder Kenneth Lay, former chief executive officer Jeff Skilling and former top accountant Richard Causey that they couldn't get a fair trial on their home turf.

World

Dorm slaying in China: A 21-year-old man who broke into a Chinese high school dormitory and stabbed nine boys to death has been executed less than two months after the attack, the government announced Thursday.

Yan Yanning was put to death Tuesday in the central province of Henan, where he was convicted of attacking the boys on Nov. 25 in the city of Ruzhou, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Afghan opium trade: Afghan authorities are determined to destroy the country's \$2.8 billion opium trade, but they must take care not to provoke unrest among farmers who depend on the crop, Afghanistan's new counter-narcotics minister said Thursday.

Habibullah Qaderi appealed for international aid to tear down the growing opium and help train counter-narcotics forces to stem the flood of cheap Afghan heroin onto world markets.

"To take away the livelihood of the farmers could be dangerous in some parts of Afghanistan, particularly in this period ahead of elections," Qaderi told reporters during a visit to NATO headquarters in Belgium.

Canadian mad cow cases: Government officials are now tracing six cows shipped into the United States from the same Canadian herd as an animal with mad cow disease.

The infected dairy cow was born within one year of the others.

Agriculture Department spokesman Ed Lord said Wednesday that the agency is tracking their movements.

Honduras bus assault: One of the alleged masterminds of a gang that killed 28 people on a bus in Honduras last month was found dead in a prison bathroom, and officials said Wednesday they believe the death was a homicide.

Security Minister Oscar Alvarez said the body of Juan Bautista Jimenez, 27, was found Tuesday hanging in Honduras' National Penitentiary, which is located outside of the capital, Tegucigalpa.

The massacre took place on a bus filled with workers returning home and shoppers buying gifts for Christmas.

A car carrying two armed men cut off the bus, and seven presumed gang members opened fire on its passengers.

Beef imports to Japan: Japanese and U.S. officials are nearing a resolution to a 13-month ban on American beef imports to Japan that could soon have U.S. beef producers regaining limited access to a billion-dollar market, a U.S. agricultural official said Wednesday.

"We feel we have reached a mutual resolution for trade resumption ... and that that resolution is close at hand," Chuck Lambert, deputy under secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's marketing and regulatory programs, told reporters in Tokyo.

Japan banned American beef imports in December 2003 after the discovery of the first U.S. case of mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy. At the time, Japan was the most lucrative overseas market for American beef, with sales exceeding \$1.7 billion in 2003.

War on terrorism

Gitmo detainees: A federal judge threw out a lawsuit by foreign-born terror suspects challenging their detention in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, ruling that last year's landmark Supreme Court ruling did not provide them the legal basis to win their freedom.

U.S. District Judge Richard Leon ruled Wednesday that Congress had authorized the president to order the detention of "enemy combatants" for the duration of the war on terror.

The lawsuit by seven of the roughly 550 detainees being held at the U.S. Navy base failed to show valid legal grounds to overturn that power, Leon said.

As a result, the proper place to contest their detention is before military review boards, not federal courts.

Stories and photo from The Associated Press

INAUGURATION

Bush takes oath for second term

Americans flood Capitol during 55th presidential inauguration

BY DEB RIECHMANN
DAVID ESPO

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — George W. Bush swore the presidential oath for a second term in turbulent times Thursday and issued a sweeping pledge to spread liberty and freedom "to the darkest corners of the world."

"Our country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfill and would be dishonorable to abandon," said the president, who led the nation to war in Iraq in a first term marked by terrorist attacks on the United States.

In a speech delivered before a vast throng of fellow Americans spilling away from the steps of the Capitol, Bush said he would place the nation on the side of the world's oppressed people. "All who live in tyranny and hopelessness can know: The United States will not ignore your oppression, or excuse your oppressors. When you stand for your liberty, we will stand with you."

Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist, 80, ailing with thyroid cancer and the subject of retirement speculation, administered the oath of office. The 58-year-old president placed one hand on a family Bible and raised the other as he recited an oath as old as the Republic.

The weather was cold, security was extraordinarily tight for the nation's 55th inauguration, the first since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Sharpshooters dressed in black scanned the vast crowd from rooftops and hundreds of police stood shoulder to shoulder along the route of the mid-afternoon inaugural parade.

Newly sworn in, Bush offered an implied rebuttal to critics of his foreign policy and the war in Iraq. "Some, I know, have questioned the global appeal of liberty," he said, "though this time in history, four decades defined by the swiftest advance of freedom ever seen, is an odd time for doubt."

"We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom," he said in remarks that were short of all but the most glancing references to the dominant political issues of the day.

Instead, he packed the first speech of a new term with multiple references to freedom and liberty, references to God — and a reminder of Abraham Lincoln's long-ago admonition. "Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and, under the rule of a just God, cannot long retain it," he quoted the 16th president.

The spread of freedom and liberty were the oldest ideals of America, Bush said. "Now it is the urgent requirement of our nation's security, and the calling of our time."

Bush, his family and congressional leaders moved into the Capitol following the midday swearing-in and speech, joining other members of the nation's political elite for lunch.

The GOP-controlled Senate was convening at mid-afternoon, with confirmation of the first of Bush's second-term Cabinet officers on the agenda.

The president awoke before dawn in the White House, then traveled a few blocks with his wife, Laura, and their twin daugh-



Capitol Hill visitors and guests watch President Bush's inauguration Thursday in Washington.

ters, Jenna and Barbara, to the traditional pre-inauguration prayer service.

A few hours later, they journeyed 16 blocks along historic Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, where Bush stood four years earlier to take the office for the first time.

That was before terrorists struck the United States, plunging America into a challenging new era, and prompting the president to order the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. The inaugural pageantry unfolded half a world away from that conflict — a war and messy aftermath that has claimed the lives of more than 1,300 Americans and was a key fault line in last fall's election.

Bush's victory made him the 16th president in American history to win a second term after a full first four years — an accomplishment denied his father in 1992. In the process, he led Republicans to larger majorities in the House and Senate, and has outlined a conservative second-term domestic agenda that includes major changes in Social Security and taxes.

The Constitution commanded that Bush take the oath of office at the stroke of noon. Tradition dictated the Capitol as the setting, curiosity and celebration accounted for the throng that traditionally spilled down Capitol Hill toward the historic National Mall and the monuments beyond.

Vice President Dick Cheney took the oath for a second term moments before the president. House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois swore him in.

Parade route garnished with both pomp, protests

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Thursday's inaugural parade was a mixture of pomp and precaution, with protesters confined to small sections of the parade route and armed guards surrounding even the supporters.

Floats and performers from 46 states were represented in the procession. Military honorees included cadets from the Virginia Military Institute, a precision drill team from The Citadel in South Carolina and Purple Heart veterans from Maryland.

Petty Officer 1st Class John Caudle, 43, a chaplain's assistant at the National Naval Medical Center in nearby Bethesda, Md., navigated the city's partially closed subway system with his wife, Lori, to watch the festivities.

"He's our commander in chief, and I'm proud to serve under him," he said.

President Bush was to launch the parade with a review of troops lined up near the steps of the Capitol.

Among the first crowds to greet his motorcade were pro-

testers, while a more friendly audience lined the streets closer to the end of the parade near the White House.

Lines at the checkpoints for designated protest areas moved slowly throughout the day, as hundreds waited their turn to go through metal detectors. Large banners were prohibited near the parade route, as were bottles or other containers that could be used as projectiles.

One of the protesters waiting in line, Juan Carlos Reyes, a former avionics technician in the U.S. Air Force, began shouting as his frustration mounted.

"What kind of coward do you support?" Reyes shouted, then led many in the group with the chant, "Let us in! Let us in!"

But farther up the parade route, supporters with tickets found it easier getting to their bleacher seats, which lined much of the president's 1.7-mile path.

Organizers said about 40,000 paid between \$15 and \$125 for those seats, but about 60,000 more were expected to cheer or jeer the president along the route.

Editor Pat Dickson contributed to this article.



President Bush and first lady Laura Bush depart the North Portico of the White House for the limousine ride to the Capitol on Thursday with their daughters Barbara, far left, and Jenna.

INAUGURATION



AP photos

Above: Former President George H. W. Bush, right, looks up with his wife, Barbara, and granddaughters Barbara, back left, and Jenna as they walk through the Rotunda in the Capitol in Washington on Thursday. Right: President Bush walks through the Rotunda on his way to the podium at the inauguration ceremony.



Bush speech: U.S. will fight tyranny

The Associated Press

Some highlights of President Bush's inauguration speech:

At this second gathering, our duties are defined not by the words I use, but by the history we have seen together. For a half century, America defended our own freedom by standing watch on distant borders. After the shipwreck of communism came years of relative quiet, years of repose, years of sabbatical — and then there came a day of fire.

We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.

So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.

The great objective of ending tyranny is the concentrated work of generations. The difficulty of the task is no excuse for avoiding it. America's influence is not unlimited, but fortunately for the oppressed, America's

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for the full speech
and more coverage**

influence is considerable, and we will use it confidently in freedom's cause.

My most solemn duty is to protect this nation and its people against further attacks and emerging threats. Some have unwisely chosen to test America's resolve, and have found it firm.

We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation: The moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right. America will not pretend that jailed dissidents prefer their chains, or that women welcome humiliation and servitude, or that any human being aspires to live at the mercy of bullies.

From all of you, I have asked patience in the hard task of securing America, which you have granted in good measure. Our country has accepted obligations that are difficult to fulfill, and would be dishonorable to abandon.

Yet because we have acted in the great liberating tradition of this nation, tens of millions have achieved their freedom.

In America's ideal of freedom, citizens find the dignity and security of economic independence, instead of laboring on the edge of subsistence. This is the broader definition of liberty that motivated the Homestead Act, the Social Security Act, and the GI Bill of Rights. And now we will extend this vision by reforming great institutions to serve the needs of our time. To give every American a stake in the promise and future of our country, we will bring the highest standards to our schools, and build an ownership society. We will widen the ownership of homes and businesses, retirement savings and health insurance — preparing our people for the challenges of life in a free society.

We go forward with complete confidence in the eventual triumph of freedom. Not because history runs on the wheels of inevitability; it is human choices that move events. Not because we consider ourselves a chosen nation; God moves and chooses as He wills. We have confidence because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind, the hunger in dark places, the longing of the soul.



President Bush delivers his inaugural address at the Capitol.



Clockwise from above: President Bush's daughters Barbara, left, and Jenna look on as President Bush kisses first lady Laura Bush on Capitol Hill. Bush and Vice President Cheney wave to the crowd on Capitol Hill. Former Vice President Dan Quayle, left, talks with Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., on Capitol Hill before Bush's inaugural address.



INAUGURATION



PHOTOS BY MORGAN LOOS/Stars and Stripes



Above: Protesters and ticketed parade attendees fill 7th Street N.W. in Washington as they wait to pass through the security checkpoint.

Left: Matthew Ensor, left, and Tom Wingate from Maryland hold signs protesting President Bush and the war while they stand in line to get into the inaugural parade area.



AP photos

Above: Former President Jimmy Carter and Roslyn Carter arrive for the swearing in ceremony of President Bush at the U.S. Capitol.

Below: Former presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., waves as he arrives at the ceremony.

Bush hopes to avoid 'second-term' curse

By DAVID S. BRODER

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — As he takes the oath of office for the second time Thursday, President Bush will confront major challenges, including an unfinished war in Iraq and a looming budget deficit and determined political opposition at home. And he also must overcome what some historians refer to as the "second-term curse" — the pattern of meager progress and increasing frustration for almost every re-elected president in modern times.

Bush has armed himself for these struggles in the best way he knows how, by rolling up a popular-vote majority and spurring his party to gains in Congress. He told The Washington Post in an interview last Friday: "I'm excited about the second term. I worked hard to get there and campaigned on some specific issues that I'm looking forward to working with the Congress on."

But if the portraits of former second-term presidents could speak to Bush, almost all of them would say, "Beware what may befall you."

From Woodrow Wilson, who suffered a stroke and saw his dream of the League of Nations rejected, down to Bill Clinton, who had to survive an impeachment effort, the pattern has not been happy.

As if to ward off a similar fate, Bush has set forth a highly ambitious agenda for the next four years. Karl Rove, the architect of both of Bush's White House victories, said in an interview that, from his first conversations with the president about the 2004 campaign, it was clear that Bush's instinct was to set forth big goals and build the political momentum needed to reach them.

The election provided Bush with a strong start in meeting the challenges of his second term. He improved on his 2000 showing, when he trailed Al Gore in the popular vote, and in November he became the first Republican president in 104 years to be reelected with majorities in both the House and the Senate.

Since Election Day, he has substantially revised his Cabinet, naming new people to run nine of the 15 departments. He has shifted some assignments on the senior White House staff, relieving aides who had exhausted themselves in the first term.

Bush will need all the momentum he can muster, because the challenges are formidable. As his war in Iraq heads into its third year, the casualties continue and the outcome remains in doubt. It has been costly in lives and treasure, and it has strained the capacity of the U.S. military to meet other global commitments.

Meanwhile, here at home, the bill is coming due on the huge budget deficits of his first term,

even as demands rise for more government spending on health care, education and transportation. Energy policy — long stalemated by regional and environmental issues — is in gridlock.

As if all that were not enough, the president has placed at the top of his agenda the revision of four basic American institutions,

Analysis

seeking fundamental changes that would alter the lives of virtually every American.

■ He wants to change the Social Security system, the 70-year-old prop for the retirement planning of all workers and their families, shifting it from a fixed monthly government stipend to a payout that would depend on people's skills in gauging the financial markets.

■ He wants to intervene to slow the flood of lawsuits filed in civil cases, limit the awards for damages and reduce the incentives for lawyers to file such suits.

■ He wants to revise American high schools, stiffening the requirements for graduation, even as grade school nationwide still struggle to meet the requirements he put on them in his first term.

■ And he wants to remake the judicial branch of government with the appointment of more "strict constructionist" judges, including in all likelihood one or more new justices who could shift the balance on the Supreme Court.

Every new presidential term begins on a note of hope, and this one is no different — even though Bush is, by some measures, in a shakier political position than many of his predecessors.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll completed Sunday placed Bush's job approval at 52 percent, with 46 percent saying they disapproved. By comparison, Clinton's approval-disapproval scores were 60 to 34 percent in January 1997, and Ronald Reagan's were 68 to 28 percent in January 1985.

Yet both those predecessors joined the list of chief executives who saw things go sharply downhill after their first terms: Harry S. Truman and Lyndon B. Johnson, who enjoyed high popularity after filling out terms for predecessors who died in office, were so weakened by politics that they chose not to seek reelection.

Richard M. Nixon was forced to resign over the Watergate scandal and the cover-up of that "third-rate burglary." Dwight D. Eisenhower and Reagan were slowed by illnesses and foreign policy reversals — the U-2 affair for the former, the Iran-contra scandal for the latter.

Only Reagan retained enough popularity at the end of his term to see a successor of the same party. Vice President George H.W. Bush, elected, for the others, retirement came amid loud rumblings of political dissent and disillusionment.

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INAUGURATION

Troops see inauguration as special event

BY PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The 55th Inaugural festivities in Washington were special for everyone — but none more than the U.S. military. "I think it's wonderful," said Sgt. James Loomis, 21, of Lunenburg, Va. "It'll probably be the only time that I can be in uniform in our nation's capital."



Dineen

Loomis, from the 2nd Battalion, 116th Regiment of the Virginia National Guard, did not mind working under the Military District of Washington's command for a few days.

"They called the governor, and here we are. It's wonderful," Staff Sgt. Kristopher Provencher, of the 621st Air Mobility Squadron at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J., put in for the duty.

"I like it," the Manchester, N.H., native said. "It's really different to see how it comes together, with 150,000 people showing up. It's kind of amazing."

Provencher, 29, wasn't bothered by the protesters shouting as they walked past.

"They don't bother us [military

people]," he said.

Working security alongside him was Christopher Dineen, on temporary duty from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, for about a month.

"I wanted this. I had to go through two applications processes — I failed the first time. This is a once-in-a-lifetime thing."

Was he bothered by the bitter cold, coming from Hawaii?

"Oh, no. I was [stationed] at Malmstrom [Air Force Base] in Montana for 11 years. This is great!"

Thousands of military people had been tasked with security for the parade and other inauguration events, but some came just to be part of the party, or to show their colors.

Geoffrey Hoyt, 30, of Danville, N.Y., came with his family to support the president.

"Very much so," he said.

He rode Metro to the events, where, he said, he saw "all kinds of protesters" riding in, especially vocal anti-war protesters.

"They were dressed like President Bush and Vice President

Cheney, and the guy dressed like the president had the world under his arm and he was drinking a can of oil ..."

Hoyt, of the 113th Communications Squadron in Washington, an Air National Guard unit, was jostled by protesters as he talked.

"Quite a mixed crowd," he mused.

Also there just to support the president, Hoyt had words of encouragement for those deployed, as well.

"Good luck and — can I swear? Good luck and kick ass!"

Nearby, Zejir "Ziggy" Berisha, a native of Kosovo and now a citizen with two sons in the U.S. Army and two in the Marines, waved his flag and shouted support for Bush.

"This nation underneath God is best on Earth!"

Asked about the protesters, he shrugged them off.

"Disagree is good! I disagree with my wife 35 years! Disagree is OK."

Berisha spoke of how different it was when he was living in Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito. "Tito used to shoot people for speaking against them. He shot two of my friends."

Berisha is a little more reserved about free speech when it comes to his boys.

"I tell them, you speak against this country, you speak against me!"

Small Patrick Dickson at: dicksonp@stripes.osd.mil



Hoyt



MORGAN LOOS/Stars and Stripes

Zejir "Ziggy" Berisha, 62, a native of Kosovo and now a U.S. citizen, shows his support for President Bush before the inaugural parade. Now living in Waterbury, Conn., Ziggy called the celebration "the best! I was here four years ago, and I'm here again. It's like I'm born again!"

Protesters hit streets for Bush ceremony

BY JEANNINE AVERSA

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Anti-war protesters, including some who carried coffin-like cardboard boxes to signify the deaths of U.S. troops in Iraq, descended on the capital Thursday. Some of their chants could be heard as President Bush delivered his inaugural address.

The chants came toward the end of Bush's speech, and the president continued his address without interruption or any sign that he heard them.

On Capitol Hill, some protesters were briefly detained by police, and then released after Bush finished speaking, said Andrea Buffa, spokeswoman for Code Pink: Women for Peace, a social justice peace movement.

Earlier in the day, anti-war protesters, including some who carried coffin-like cardboard boxes to signify the deaths of U.S. troops in Iraq, descended on the capital Thursday.

About 500 people rallied in a park several miles from the Capitol.

"Worst President Ever" and



Juan Carlos Reyes of Lake Tahoe, Calif., carries protest signs labeling President Bush and Vice President Cheney as "warmongers" during inauguration Day protests in downtown Washington.

"Four more years: God HELP America" were on some of the signs.

"It's important to show that when Bush's second inauguration goes into the record books, there was healthy dissent," said Jared Maslin, 19, of Hanover, N.H.

Aidan Delgado, 23, of Sarasota, Fla., returned to the United States last April after his military service. He said he was a mechanic at Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, which gained notoriety as a place of torture during Saddam Hussein's rule and was the scene of alleged prisoner abuse by U.S. troops.

"What I experienced in Iraq fills me with remorse," Delgado told the crowd of protesters. "If we are going to preserve our na-

tion at all, we need to criticize what we did wrong and we have to criticize ourselves," he said.

Several police cars lined the perimeter of the park, but the event remained peaceful.

At one demonstration, supporters of the president engaged in a shouting and shoving match with some opponents of the war.

An anti-war group called the Rhythm Workers Union banged on steel drums and danced in mudaked boots.

Some protesters carried signs advocating abortion rights. Others urged people to donate money to tsunami relief efforts. Some took issue with Bush's environmental and economic policies.

Associated Press writers Genaro Armas and David J. Quinn contributed to this report.

Cheney: Presidency has been restored to power

BY BOB WOODWARD

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Vice President Dick Cheney said in an interview that the proper power of the presidency has finally been restored after being diminished in the wake of the Vietnam War and Watergate, and that President Bush contributed to the process by not allowing his narrow victory in the 2000 presidential race to inhibit him during his first term.

"Even after we went through all of that, he never wanted to allow, correctly, the closeness of our election to in any way diminish the power of the presidency, lead him to make a decision that he needed to somehow trim his sails, and be less than a fully authorized, if you will, commander in chief, leader of our government, president of the United States," Cheney said in an December interview that will be broadcast Thursday night on "Inside the Presidency," a documentary on the History Channel.

Bush's assertiveness in the early days of his presidency, Cheney said, meant that he was able to respond decisively after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. "Faced with a whole new threat, set of challenges, you needed a strong, decisive president, and that's exactly what we had," Cheney said.

Cheney said that the "low

point" of presidential power occurred at the beginning of Gerald Ford's presidency and that "over time" it has been restored, despite such challenges as the Iran-Contra investigation under President Ronald Reagan, which Cheney characterized as an attempt ... to try to criminalize a policy difference" between the president and Congress.

"I think, in fact, there has been over time a restoration, if you will, of the power and authority of the president," Cheney said.

Cheney was especially critical of anything that would undermine the president's powers as commander in chief.

"That made a change in the institutional arrangements that I don't think is healthy," the vice president said. "I don't think you should restrict the president's authority to deploy military forces because of the Vietnam experience."

History has been cheated after Watergate, he said. "The investigations that have occurred over the years, the role of the special prosecutors and so forth have dried up a major source for history."

"I don't keep a diary," he said, adding that he also does not use e-mail. "And I don't write letters."

So where is the record? "It's all right up here," he said, pointing to his head. "And I suppose that'll fade over the years."

INAUGURATION



Above: Fireworks light up the Wednesday evening sky near the Washington Monument toward the end of the Celebration of Freedom Concert on the Ellipse. Right: President Bush and first lady Laura Bush wave to the crowd during the concert, part of the inaugural celebrations this week in the nation's capital.



Concert celebrates freedom

Yee-haw!

Texans well shod for two-stepping at 'Boots' ball

By LIZ SIDOTT
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — First lady Laura Bush chose high fashion for the Black Tie and Boots Ball, sporting a raspberry silk taffeta Carolina Herrera ensemble with a Western touch — a full skirt and fitted bodice resembling a button-down shirt.

But for many of President Bush's Texas supporters, the ball was more about the boots — and less about the couture.

The Texas State Society's gala Wednesday was arguably the most unconventional bash of inaugural week — at least in fashion terms.

It's the only party in town where the 10,000 guests are not just encouraged but expected to pair down-home duds like Stetson hats and Tony Lamas kicks with tuxedos and evening gowns.

Sarah Furlow, 19, needed just the right footwear — in color and style — to go with the brown, low-cut bead-and-lace slip dress from Cache that she already had hanging in her closet.

The Texas Tech University fashion design major found just the pair — on the feet of a friend while they were at the movies.

"I asked her if I could borrow them and she took them off in the movie theater and walked out barefoot," Furlow said, still laughing at the episode.

Lorian Sessions of San Antonio donned a new pair of black kangaroo boots, decorated with a white star and embroidery, with an aqua-colored mink wrap she bought on sale at Saks. The



President Bush looks toward the balcony Wednesday as his daughter Jenna flashes the University of Texas "Longhorn" sign at the Texas State Society's Black Tie and Boots Ball, the week's first inaugural gala. Looking over the president's shoulder is Jenna's twin, Barbara.

35-year-old wore it over a simple black floor-length gown.

"It was \$35. I bought it 10 years ago two sizes too big. I figured I'd either let it out or take it in when I finally wore it."

"I had to take it in, thank God! I refused to put a thousand-dollar dress with a pair of boots!" she said.

Her husband, Mark, said the special part of his ensemble was not the custom-made tuxedo he got from a tailor in Texas. It was his lizard skin boots.

Sue Brannon, chairwoman of the Midland County Republican Party in Texas, took her boots with her when she shopped for her clingy and sparkly red floor-length frock.

"These are red snake. My husband bought them for me 15 years ago. These are my dancing boots. They're Tony Lamas. I love them so much," said Brannon, 67, who also added to her outfit a rhinestone tiara, a matching brooch that spelled Bush and the Texas flag on a necklace.

Anti-Bush events planned in Europe

By WILLIAM J. KOLE
The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — In Geneva, they'll read patriotic poetry.

In Vienna, they'll drown their sorrows and plot their revenge.

In London, they'll stage a candlelight protest outside the U.S. Embassy.

Across Europe, a land none too friendly to George W. Bush, locals and American expatriates united in their opposition to the U.S. president were marking his inauguration Thursday with some unabashed Bush-bashing.

The Austria chapter of Democrats Abroad, which scrapped plans for a black-tie "un-augural ball" because of the tsunami in southern Asia, said its members instead would gather at a traditional Vienna wine bar "to scheme, plot and plan the retaking of our country."

In Britain, anti-Bush demonstrators staged a candlelight protest outside the American embassy in central London, staged by the Stop the War Coalition, which organized mass rallies opposing the Iraq conflict in 2003.

Rather than watch the Washington inauguration on television, the U.K. contingent of Democrats Abroad organized a talk by liberal author Ron Suskind, whose book "The Price of Loyalty" — an insider account of Paul O'Neill's time as U.S. treasury secretary — paints an unflattering portrait of Bush.

Bush's re-election was widely seen as negative for global peace and security in 16 of 21 countries polled in a BBC World Service survey released on the eve of the inauguration. On average across all the countries, 58 percent called his re-election a negative development; only 26 percent described it as positive.

Protesters in Germany got an early start with a candlelight vigil Wednesday evening in front of Berlin's landmark Brandenburg Gate, where they held a dozen American flags upside down to symbolize an SOS distress call.

"We're Americans who vote, and who have a voice in U.S. policy," said Elsa Rassbach of American Voices Abroad, which organized the event in the country that had overwhelmingly backed Democrat John Kerry for president.

"I think there's alarm here, so I think many Germans would be happy that many U.S. citizens don't agree with Bush," she said.

Another group, Vote 44, which formed in Europe to promote a 44th president to replace Bush, planned a protest rally at the Brandenburg Gate for Thursday under the slogan: "You've Got a Voice."

"We call on all people worldwide who are against the policies of the Bush government to take part in the demonstration or organize one in their own cities," the organization said in a statement.

In southwestern France, Democrats Abroad screened a film called "Bush's Brain" and called on its supporters in Paris to dress in Kerry blue and gather at a trendy bar for "a dialogue of truth about the Bush agenda and its global effect on all of us."

About 200 anti-Bush activists planned to watch the inauguration on TV while hearing from Ukrainian youths who worked to elect opposition reformist Viktor Yushchenko as president. Overall, though, the emphasis was on "celebrating being Democrats, not 'we hate Bush,'" said Sheila Sarem of Young Democrats Abroad France.

Foot patrols watchful of mosque, markets

BY JASON CHUDY
Stars and Stripes

BAGHDAD — With its golden dome and four large minarets, the Jami al-Kazimiya mosque in the city's Kadhamiya neighborhood is considered one of the Muslim Shiites' holiest sites in Iraq. The mosque is just a short walk from Forward Operating Base Justice, home to the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment. So, in addition to their normal patrols around their sector, battalion soldiers regularly walk the streets and markets that surround the mosque.

On Saturday morning, a few dozen Company A soldiers and local Iraqi National Guardsmen left the base and made the one-kilometer walk to the mosque.

"We try to do a minimum of one totally dismounted [foot] patrol per week [around the mosque]," said 1st Sgt. Brian Byrd. "We try to include the ING in all of our patrols ... because they've got a vested interest in the area — more so than us."

The Jami al-Kazimiya mosque is the burial site for two important Shiite imams. A shrine was built over the grave site of the seventh imam, Musa ibn Ja'far al-Kazim. His grandson, the ninth imam, Muhammad ibn Ali al-taqi al-Jawad, also is buried on the grounds.

The area is an important pilgrimage site for the Shiites, and earlier this month thousands of pilgrims traveled to the mosque for the traditional observance of the death of the ninth imam.

But it's not just Iraqis who visit the site, the soldiers said. Many U.S. officials and media who visit FOB Justice are often taken to foot patrols in the area, which is considered one of the safer parts of the 4th Battalion's sector.

"It's a pretty safe area," said Pfc. Jacob Bauer of the company's 1st Platoon. "It's not like you're going out on a dismounted patrol that's going to get everybody killed."



JASON CHUDY/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers and an interpreter from Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment drink tea on a Kadhamiya side street recently as the shop vendor clips his finger nails. The Company A members are, from left, Staff Sgt. Lomnie Schultz, interpreter "Chris," 1st Sgt. Brian Byrd and Staff Sgt. Richard Byrd. Byrd asked the man about his views on the upcoming election and the availability of gas in the area.

"As long as you've got support [from the FOB], it's not a big deal, they're pretty friendly," said Sgt. Alfred Pfaff about the area residents.

As the joint patrol walked down the main street between the base and the mosque, hundreds of Iraqis milled about the small shops and street vendors. Most watched indifferently as the patrol walked by, but the first few soldiers passed most returned to their shopping or resumed conversations.

These daytime foot patrols, Byrd said, are important for the soldiers and for the overall military effort in Iraq.

"The biggest thing is it breaks the monotony of constantly doing vehicle patrols," Byrd said. "We're light infantry, so it gets us back to basics. We can work on some skills, [such as] speed control, maintaining distance."

The patrols avoid most of the more narrow and crowded alleyways.

"I'm in the markets surrounded by people, it's easy to get your throat cut," Bauer warned.

The soldiers sometimes turn into sightseers. Heading past the mosque on a crowded — but wide — street, a few soldiers pulled out cameras.

"Yeah, we take a few pictures," said Bauer. "We don't go there much."

The patrols are spread between different platoons so some of the soldiers have gotten close to the mosque only a few times during daylight hours. The battalion regularly runs vehicle patrols through the area after the 11 p.m. curfew.

Some nights, Pfaff said, soldiers will leave the Humvees and

walk through the area, but never without the vehicles nearby. They don't — or at least shouldn't — encounter people on these nighttime patrols, so the daylight patrols are run for more than security.

"It gives us face time with the people," Byrd said. "It shows them we're human, too." The soldiers' close interactions with the passers-by allow them to gather information on anything from people's impressions of the upcoming elections to crime or insurgent problems in the area.

As if running in the upcoming election himself, Byrd made eye contact and gave the traditional Arabic greeting of "Peace be with you" to many passing Iraqis.

During the last half of the patrol, the soldiers stopped for a few minutes at a main intersection leading to the mosque. Most provided security as a few soldiers talked to Iraqis who were milling about. One officer quickly bought a silk scarf for his wife, and an Iraqi boy brought two Americans hot fried dough balls that tasted like a hush puppy.

Pfaff said most of the soldiers have been offered, and accepted, something to eat from area residents and businessmen. He said they limit what they eat, however, as most have concerns about the cleanliness of some Iraqi kitchens.

A few blocks later, the patrol stopped for *chai*, the Iraqi word for tea. Byrd and a few other soldiers talked to the tea seller through an interpreter before paying for their tea and continuing on.

Less than two hours after the patrol started, the soldiers returned to FOB Justice with a few photographs and trinkets, and Iraqi forces have rounded up 20 suspected insurgents without a shot being fired.

"It's not a training mission," Byrd said, "but it does help us keep our focus."

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U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Wednesday, at least 1,368 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,073 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said.

The figures include three military civilians. The AP count is four higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Wednesday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, seven; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,230 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 964 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ No deaths reported.

The latest identifications reported by military:

Army Pfc. George R. Geer, 27, Cortez, Colo., and Army Staff Sgt. Thomas E. Vitagliano, 33, New Haven, Conn., killed Monday when a vehicle-borne explosive detonated in Ramadi, Iraq, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Casey, South Korea.

U.S. troops launch more sweeps in Mosul

BY JASON KEYSER
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — U.S. troops launched fresh raids Thursday around the northern city of Mosul to disrupt in guerrillas who have threatened to disrupt the upcoming election.

Iraqi forces sealed off main routes into Baghdad one day after a wave of car bombings rocked the capital.

An Islamic Web site linked to an Iraqi militant group claimed that a Briton and a Swede were kidnapped in the northern town of Beiji and killed after they were found to be intelligence agents. British and Swedish officials were checking the claims.

Also, a Brazilian who disappeared during an ambush Wednesday in Beiji probably was kidnapped, according to his company, the Sao-Paulo-based Constructora Norberto Odebrecht SA, which is working on a power plant in the city.

Troops from the Army's Stryker Brigade Combat Team detained nine people and seized weapons in the overnight sweeps in Mosul, the military said.

U.S. forces have intensified nighttime operations in Iraq's third-largest city in a race to

make it safe enough for voters to cast ballots in the Jan. 30 parliamentary and regional elections. In the past two weeks alone, U.S. and Iraqi forces have rounded up 20 suspected insurgents there, the U.S. military said.

A day after a string of car bombings in Baghdad, major highways leading into the capital from the south and west were sealed off by Iraqi forces.

Alaa Mahmoud, an Iraqi National Guard captain at one roadblock, said he was under orders to prevent all vehicle traffic from entering the city. Government officials said he was not reached for comment because officers were closed at the start of a four-day Muslim holiday.

A surge in car bombings and street clashes in the city has followed November's U.S. offensive in the former insurgent hub of Fallujah, and U.S. commanders believe many rebel fighters who fled that siege have set up new operations in Mosul and other cities.

In the latest fighting, insurgents shelled a hospital in Mosul where U.S. and Iraqi forces had taken up positions in an annex wing, hospital director Faris Hani said. Doctors and patients fled, but no casualties were reported.

American soldiers on patrol Tuesday in Mosul killed three insurgents who fired from a car, the military said.

The claim that the Swede and Briton were abducted and killed could not be verified. The statement, issued by Alaa al-Sunnaah, a known militant group spokesman, appeared on Web site used as a clearinghouse for the group's claims and extremist material.

"We in Ansar al-Sunnaah managed, thanks be to God, to get the heads of the enemy crusader infidels and those cooperating with them," the claim said.

"The lions of faith managed to set a tight trap and kidnap two agents: one British and one Swedish. The trap in Iraq is working for intelligence apparatuses of the infidel troops in Beiji, and we executed God's punishment by killing them," it said.

The Brazilians, who had the missing foreigner was a Japanese engineer, but later said he was from Brazil. The two men slain in the ambush were employed by the British-based Janus Security Risk Management, Ltd.

New video of the aftermath of the attack showed two cars riddled with bullets and the ground soaked with blood.



A Marine from the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit guards prisoners captured during an early morning raid in Jabella, Iraq, on Wednesday. The raid kicked off Operation Checkmate, a rushed offensive against the insurgency.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

Jason Chudy and Joseph Giordono

Strange things keep popping up in Iraq

Stars and Stripes

The residential trailers on Baghdad's Camp Liberty don't have lawns, but one of them sure does have a heck of a lawn ornament.

Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment have an inert, 20-foot-tall SA-2 surface-to-air missile leaning against their trailer, and it's almost become a tourist attraction since they brought it to camp two weeks ago.

"Ever since then, it's become a photo opportunity for people," said Sgt. 1st Class David Simpson.

The missile's top can be seen poking up into the air from the main road running through camp.

Simpson, who shares half of the trailer with platoon leader 1st Lt. Joshua Betty, said that they'll frequently walk out of their trailer and see people gawking or taking pictures.

Army Kiowa helicopters found the missile on a sheik's land north of Abu Ghraib and called in Simpson's platoon to check it out. When they arrived, they realized that it had no fuel and no warhead.

They were ordered to bring it to camp, so they loaded it on top of a Humvee and drove it back. Later, in the same area, two other SA-2 missiles were found and officials snagged them instead. Simpson and Betty got to keep theirs, and now it leans



Courtesy of the U.S. Army

An Iraqi man reluctantly opens the trunk of his sedan during a checkpoint on a road outside Ramadi, Iraq. When he opened the trunk, out popped the heads of four sheep the man was transporting in the trunk.

against their trailer.

"It's kind of like our pet now," said Simpson.

Capt. Scott Shaw, the company commander, said he considers the missile as

nothing more than an Iraqi lawn gnome.

Simpson said he'd like to bring the missile back to Fort Drum, N.Y., when they deploy.

"I don't know if we can get it into our

conex [shipping container]," he said. "We would if we could."

Odd discoveries

Soldiers conducting random checks of vehicles in Iraq never know what they're going to turn up. While looking for illegal weapons, explosives or components of roadside bombs, the soldiers also find almost anything else they can imagine, or sometimes, things they never thought they'd see.

This week, scout platoon members of Company A, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, set up an inspection point on a road outside of Ramadi. They searched each vehicle and its occupants, usually turning up nothing.

A few hours into the mission, a group of three men in an orange-and-white sedan pulled up. The first two men exited and opened the doors and hood at the soldiers' command. But the third man refused to open the trunk.

The soldiers repeated the order, but the man still refused, making a strange noise and throwing up confused hand gestures. Finally, the man opened the trunk. Up popped one furry head. And then another, and another. The men were transporting at least four small sheep in the back of the car.

"I've got to get a picture of this," said Pfc. Matthew Thacker, retrieving a small disposable camera from his Humvee.

"My wife is never gonna believe it. She's gonna crack up," he said.

Message for our men and women in uniform...

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STARS & STRIPES
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Free respite child care over for troops

BY LISA BURGESS
Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — When a New Jersey Air National Guard member needed someone to take care of his newborn daughter one morning last May while the child's mother was at a doctor's appointment, Judy Novak stepped up to the plate — for free.

Novak, a licensed child care provider who lives in Toms River, N.J., was helping the reservist as part of Operation Child Care, a nationwide program to offer members of the reserve and National Guard components some respite from child care while they are home from Iraq or Afghanistan on R&R (rest and recuperation) or emergency leave.

The National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies in Washington, D.C., launched Operation Child Care in May.

The organization, which is a national network of more than 850 child care resource and referral centers located in every state, is partnering in the program with the National Association of Family Child Care, the National Child Care Association, the National Cooperative Extension System, the National 4-H Program, and the

Child Care Bureau, which falls under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Operation Child Care has 6,000 volunteers standing ready to provide assistance, according to DeVere Kutscher, a spokesman for the NACCRRA.

Bright Horizons Family Solutions and KinderCare Learning Centers' chain operations that include thousands of their child care centers across the country — are also participating.

Volunteers must commit to a minimum of four hours of free care, with the maximum "depending on the generosity of the individual provider," Kutscher said in a Wednesday telephone interview.

"Some volunteers have offered up to 70 hours" of their time to the program, he said.

The volunteers must be certified and licensed by their resident states — a process that depends on each individual state's own rules.

But beyond those requirements, Operation Child Care's sponsors are trying "to leave [the program] as open as possible, and not put too many restrictions on it," Kutscher said. "We want to encourage people to use the program."

How to use Operation Child Care

Here's information on how to use Operation Child Care:

■ Who is eligible? Any military reservist who is coming home to the United States on R&R (rest and recuperation) or emergency leave. You will need to show your orders to your provider.

■ Who do I contact? Call the Operation Child Care hot line at (800) 424-2246, or go to www.childcareaware.org/en/operationchildcare. html and fill out the request form. More information on the program can also be found at www.childcareaware.org/en/operationchildcare.

■ Then what happens? The local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency in their home area will contact eligible reservists. Some child care agencies will help make the connection between volunteers and users of the program; others will offer a list of phone numbers and addresses of the volunteer providers in their area. Users will also get a list of questions to ask potential child care volunteers.

■ How do I know these child care volunteers are

qualified? Only legally operating, licensed, certified child care providers may volunteer for the program. Each state has its own requirements for licensing.

■ How much time will I get? Volunteers must offer a minimum of four hours, but there is no maximum. Reservists should discuss this when they contact their chosen volunteer provider to set up the child care appointment.

■ What should I ask potential providers? Ask for references and contact information of parents of children that they currently or previously cared for, whether your child will be participating in planned activities while in care, and what your preferences are (e.g., no television, etc.). You should also ask if food will be provided for your child, or if you will need to provide the food if there will be outside activities.

For a full list of issues to consider before you call, go to www.childcareaware.org/en/operationchildcare. Reservists will also be offered suggestions when they contact the Operation Child Care hot line.

Novak said she heard about the Operation Child Care when her Ocean County, N.J., Children's Home Society contacted her by mail, asking for volunteers.

Although she already spent more than her required four hours caring for the reservist's

newborn, Novak said in a Wednesday telephone interview she's ready and waiting to do it again.

"Sometimes if you feel you can do a little something to make a circumstance like that, what you do to it," she said.

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Families of war dead protest after police stop Pentagon entry

BY BOB SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Pentagon police on Wednesday turned away family members of troops killed in Iraq who wanted to confront Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on the issues for the war in Iraq.

The group of about 20 was stopped before entering Pentagon property by about a dozen officers, who told the protesters they did not have the proper permission to enter the building.

Organizers said they have been petitioning for the meeting for weeks, but department officials are ignoring their requests.

"The man who was too busy to personally sign the Killed in Action letters these families received is apparently too busy to acknowledge the request of the Gold Star families for this meeting," says Lessin, co-founder of Military Families Speak Out, told reporters gathered for the event.

Five Gold Star families — ones who have lost a son daughter to fighting in Iraq — brought pictures and letters to the event to present to the secretary, and asked police to pass the items along to illustrate their loss and grief.

Cindy Sheehan, a California resident whose son Casey was killed during a mission in Saudi City last April, sheltered a photo of her son from the snow with her arms as the group tried to convince police to let them by.

"I wanted them to see my son," she said, weeping. "I wanted them to see the consequences of his actions ... I have the feeling they feel he was a dispensable asset to them."

Sheehan flew to Washington on Wednesday for the event, and will take part in the group's inauguration protests on Thursday.

Department of Defense officials did not return calls seeking comment. Police who confronted the



Cindy Sheehan clutches a photo of her deceased son, Casey, at Wednesday's protest. Casey died during an April mission in Saudi City. Families of several troops killed in action tried to confront Defense Department officials on Wednesday, but were barred by police from entering the Pentagon.

families offered numbers where protesters could obtain permits and set up formal interviews, but said security concerns prohibited allowing any of the group into Pentagon grounds.

Lessin, whose son recently returned from his overseas service, said the goal of both protests is to show the war in Iraq is "a reckless military misadventure that never should have happened."

"Shame on Secretary Rumsfeld for not recognizing these families, and shame on those who sent our children to war based on lies," she said.

Families at the event said they also wanted Rumsfeld to explain why troops in many cases weren't properly trained or equipped for the fighting, and when the other troops will be brought home.

"We're here to try and bring the truth to the Pentagon," said Celeste Zappala, a Philadelphia resident whose son Sherwood was killed in Baghdad last April.

E-mail Bob Shane III at shaneb@stripes.com

Military recruits face ASVAB fingerprinting

BY VICKI SMITH
The Associated Press

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Greg Palmer has heard the stories: A recruit fearing failure sends a ring to take the U.S. military's equivalent of the SAT, and then shows up at basic training.

"When we're going through school to become recruiters, they warn you," said Palmer, a recruit in Wheeling for the past three years.

Now the Defense Department is taking steps to make sure people trying to enter the armed services are who they claim to be. It has enlisted the Biometrics Fusion Center in Clarksburg to help develop a new fingerprinting system for recruits.

The system will be tested later this year at military processing stations in Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Los Angeles, Honolulu and San Juan, Puerto Rico, along with 21 mobile testing sites.

Eventually, it could go nationwide.

Fingerprints can verify that recruits are taking not only the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, or ASVAB, themselves but also submitting to their physical exams.

"The person who talks to the recruiter has to be the same person who takes the test, has to be the same person who takes the medical exam, has to be the same person who reports to basic training," said John D. Woodward Jr., director of the Defense Department's Biometrics Management Office in Washington, D.C.

Woodward said the Defense Department can't say how many people try to cheat on their tests, "but there certainly is anecdotal evidence of individuals sending in a ring to take the exam."

The ASVAB, a multiple-choice-style test, measures mathematical and general science knowledge, mechanical comprehension, and information about automobiles, tools, electricity and electronics.

Protecting the integrity of military testing is only part of the goal.

By spending about \$2 million on the pilot project, the military also aims to eliminate time-consuming paperwork and create a universal e-signature system.

Soldiers are fingerprinted now, along with civil servants and private contractors with security clearance. The pilot project would simply apply that requirement to recruits. Woodward said, "Probably not the first time the kid visits, but definitely earlier in the process."

Marine Col. Lon M. Yeary, commander of the Military Entrance Processing Command, said about 240,000 men and women enter the U.S. armed services each year.

"Capturing the biometric-based identity of individuals at their very first contact with a DOD activity, and then linking individuals' identity as they process for the Armed Forces, increases national security, supports the war-fighting mission, heightens the security of applicants and standardizes the DOD e-Signature process," he said.

IN THE WORLD

U.S. too busy to launch attack, Iran says

BY ALI AKBAR DAREINI

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — President Mohammad Khatami said Thursday that the United States has too many problems in Iraq to attack Iran, but that his country has plans to invade what Washington make any aggressive moves.

Khatami's remarks, made in an interview with Iran's state-run radio while the president was wrapping up a 10-day, seven-nation tour of Africa, marked the most senior response to recent reports indicating the United States may be considering military action against Iran. Khatami was expected to return from Uganda on Thursday.

Khatami responding to reports in States that administration conducting secret missions

"The possibility of a U.S. attack against Iran is very low. We think America is not in a position to take a hasty action of attacking Iran," Khatami said.

"The U.S. is deeply engaged in Iraq. We move forward with full vigilance. We don't welcome any tension but if, God forbid, it commits an act of aggression, we have prepared ourselves. We have plans for it."

He did not elaborate on how Iran would respond or defend itself.

On Monday, President Bush said on NBC's "Today" show that his administration

won't rule out the possibility of using military force against Iran over its controversial nuclear program. "I hope we can solve it diplomatically but I will never take any option off the table," he said.

Also Monday, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer Seymour Hersh reported in the New Yorker magazine that the Bush administration had been "conducting secret reconnaissance missions inside Iran at least since last summer" for the purpose of gathering intelligence and targeting information.

White House officials rejected that report as inaccurate, but top U.S. officials have articulated a tough U.S. policy toward Iran. Beyond years of animosity between the two countries, Washington considers Iran's nuclear program a threat, maintaining it is aimed at developing nuclear weapons not as an energy resource as Iran claims.

Iran's Defense Minister Ali Shamkhani said Monday that Iran has developed a strong military capability and will deliver any attacks against it. He also did not provide details, but had noted in November that Iran has been able to mass produce its Shahab-3 missile, which is capable of reaching Israel and U.S. forces in the Middle East.

Fargo: U.S. winding down tsunami effort

BY LELY T. DUHARI

The Associated Press

BANDA ACEH, Indonesia — The U.S. military — the largest group aiding tsunami survivors — said Thursday it will immediately begin scaling back its relief operations. A barrage of gunfire sent survivors diving for cover at a refugee camp in an Indonesian region torn long by a war between separatists and the government. In Japan, nations at a U.N. conference rallied behind plans for a network of buoys to warn of future killer waves in the Indian Ocean.

Adm. Thomas Fargo, commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, said the U.S. military "will start right now transferring functions to the appropriate host nations and international organizations."

About 15,000 American troops

have been deployed to tsunami-hit nations, where huge waves spawned by a massive earthquake swept away coastal settlements on Dec. 26. Most of the soldiers have been sent to worst-hit Sumatra island in Indonesia.

At a news conference in Malaysia, Fargo noted that the humanitarian missions in Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and other affected nations had moved from the "immediate relief phase" toward rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Fargo did not say how long it would take for U.S. troops to pull out completely from affected areas — but he cited U.S. military aid efforts after a powerful cyclone struck Bangladesh in 1991, which were wound down after about 60 days.

"That is probably a pretty good benchmark" for the U.S. military's current tsunami operations, he said.



At right, U.S. military helicopter crewman Petty Officer Patrick Quilter, 24, from New Braunfels, Texas, along with Lt. Rory Dupont, 28, from Jacksonville, Fla., ask villagers what relief supplies they need at Lhok Guci in Aceh province on Sumatra island on Thursday.

Indonesian officials have said they want foreign forces to leave Aceh province, at the northern tip of Sumatra, by the end of March.

The shooting outside the city of Banda Aceh underscored the fragile security situation in Aceh province, where separatist guerrillas and government forces have been fighting for 27 years.

A series of bursts of gunfire went off in the hills near the relief camp on the hilly mountain resort of Lambhe.

Neither the rebels nor soldiers were visible from the camp during the shooting. No refugees were injured, and the gunfire did not appear to be directed at the camp.

Officials talk missile defense in Australia

The Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia — U.S. defense officials were in Australia on Thursday to discuss a missile defense shield Australia has yet to specify its contribution, though Washington has shown an interest in Canberra's new radar technology.

The meeting comes after the two allies signed an agreement last July that committed Australia to helping develop a U.S. ballistic missile defense shield. Australia has yet to specify its contribution, though Washington has shown an interest in Canberra's new radar technology.

"The talks are exploring possible areas of cooperation on missile defense construction, on research and development," an Australian Defense Department spokeswoman said on condition of anonymity.

"The government will consider any proposal once they are fully developed," she added.

The department did not say when the U.S. delegation arrived in Australia or how long they would stay.

President Bush's administration has made the deployment of missile defenses a key aspect of its national security policy, saying it is vital to defend the United States against missiles launched by hostile nations.

Critics charge the technology is neither ready nor affordable, and say it fails to address the greater threat of weapons of mass destruction brought in by terrorists.

Australia's neighbors, as well as opposition lawmakers, have criticized Canberra's involvement which they argue could lead to missile proliferation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Australia says trials of the country's Indales over-the-horizon radar system in April last year showed it could detect ballistic missiles being launched.

World's largest iceberg threatens penguins

The Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — The world's largest iceberg appears to have run aground near Antarctica, posing more problems to scientific bases and penguins, where tens of thousands of chicks face starvation, scientists said Thursday.

Experts had predicted that

B15A — a 100-mile-long iceberg — would likely slam into a huge glacier near the U.S. McMurdo Research Station in Antarctica some time last weekend.

But the iceberg appeared to have run aground about three miles from the 60-mile long glacier, known as the Drygalski Ice Tongue.

Antarctica's New Zealand's science strategy man-

ager, Dean Peterson, said Thursday. "This berg has wedged itself between two shallow areas... It really hasn't gotten any closer for a week now," Peterson said.

"It's kind of shimmying back and forth now... so I don't know whether it's ever going to get to the Drygalski or not."

The apparent grounding of the

1,200-square-mile iceberg could present problems to scientific bases on the frozen continent.

B15A has blocked wind and water currents that break up ice floes in McMurdo Sound during the Antarctic summer, causing a build-up of ice behind it. The U.S. McMurdo Station and New Zealand's Scott Base are located in the sound, and Italy's Terra Nova base is nearby.

Church: Condoms still immoral

MADRID, Spain — The Catholic Church in Spain backtracked from a leading bishop's groundbreaking statement in support of condom use to fight the spread of AIDS, saying instead the church still believes artificial contraception is immoral.

A ruling Socialist politician involved in health care issues said she was mystified by the church's about-face in the space of 24 hours. Gay groups said they regretted the church's return to old policy after its "attack of lucidity."

Pakistan fuel truck attacked

QUETTA, Pakistan — Suspected Taliban rebels opened fire on a fuel truck heading to the main U.S. base in southern Afghanistan, killing the Pakistani driver and wounding his two assistants, an official said Thursday.

The attackers fled after the 10 p.m. assault Wednesday in the Dabari area of Spinboldak district in Afghanistan's Kandahar province, said district chief Fazlullahin Agha.

Speaking by phone, Agha said the fuel container truck, traveling from Pakistan, had been heading to Kandahar to supply the American military base there. He said such trucks had come under fire in the past.

Afghan suicide attack

KABUL, Afghanistan — A suicide bomber blew himself up Thursday near an Afghan warlord who helped the United States defeat the Taliban, injuring more than 20 people but failing to harm the apparent target, officials said.

A spokesman for the hardline militia said it carried out the attack on Abdul Rashid Dostum to avenge the killing of Taliban prisoners. Police said the attack carried the hallmark of al-Qaida.

From The Associated Press

OPINION

Better guidance needed on immigration

Chicago Tribune

You won't find many travel guides that warn about the dangers of arduous treks through the desert, excessive exhaustion, difficulty walking and reasoning, hallucinations and mirages, or to mention the possibility of smugglers abandoning you in the middle of nowhere, or the local police coming after you.

No, the "Guide for the Mexican Migrant" is not an Arizona tourist book. Published by the Mexican government, it is a compilation of survival tips for Mexicans who are contemplating illegally crossing the border into the United States.

The 32-page pamphlet, with comic-book-like illustrations and a press run of about 1.5 million, has created a furor among American anti-immigration groups and some elected officials, who view it as part of a Mexican strategy to aid and abet illegal immigration.

It's really nothing of the sort. Except for a few questionable tips, the booklet is filled with graphic warnings about the life-threatening risks of entering the United States illegally.

But Mexico deserves criticism for its clumsiness and ineffectiveness to U.S. public opinion and immigration policies. Just as President Bush is laboring to push the immigration-reform wave forward, the pamphlet effectively shoots out one of its tires. It's timing and worse content relegate it to the trash.

Those who take the time to read it will find the guide is filled with sensible advice,

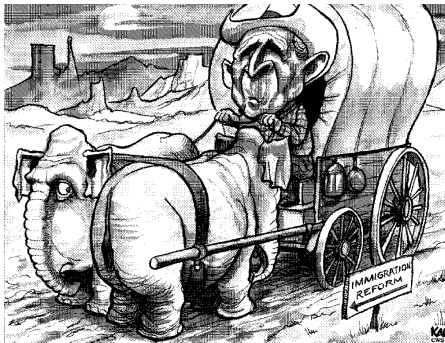
such as to get a Mexican passport and an American visa before entering the States. Others have compared it to a risk-reduction strategy: About 400 Mexicans died in 2003 trying to enter the States. The flow of illegal immigrants from Mexico is not about to eb, so it's compassionate and sensible to use education to reduce the number of deaths.

Indeed, the booklet points out everything that can go wrong for illegal immigrants: smugglers, drivings, death in the desert. It counsels never to use false identification or names, lie to the U.S. border patrol, carry any weapons or try to flee if arrested.

It gets close, though, to offering tips on how to evade U.S. law enforcement — don't give loud parties, the neighbors might call the cops — that may seem like an intrusion in our affairs by a foreign government.

But the guide's most glaring flaw is political. When he began his first term, Bush promised to work with Mexican President Vicente Fox to overhaul American immigration. That euphoria died after Sept. 11 but has been rekindled by Bush as one of his top priorities as he begins his second term. The centerpiece of his plan is a guest-worker program that would be an alternative to the current illegal immigration debate.

Opposition to such plans is bubbling among members of Congress who sense little public appetite for anything that looks, sounds or smells like amnesty for undocumented immigrants. There are a few Republicans in Congress — Sen. John McCain and Reps. Jeff Flake and Jim Kolbe, all from Arizona — who are pushing for sound immigration reform, but they are the exception.



At this juncture, Bush could have used an assist, a gesture of cooperation, from the Mexican government. Instead he got a pamphlet that may be well-meaning, but sends all the wrong signals to the American public.

A far more sensible move for Mexico would be to beef up border patrols to bust

the growing network of smugglers who send many illegal immigrants to their deaths.

One of the pamphlet's tips to immigrants is to avoid throwing rocks at U.S. border patrol cars. The Mexican government ought to heed that advice and avoid pelting an American president who is laboring to resolve the plight of undocumented immigrants.

Fifty years ago, Nautilus seized a golden opportunity

BY PETER BROOKES

Imagine the thoughts going through the minds of the captain and crew of the world's first nuclear-powered submarine, USS Nautilus, when it put to sea for the very first time — 50 years ago this week.

No only did they have to take a new submarine to sea, but also they had to control the splitting of the atom in a small space above a submerged submarine in constant danger from the nuclear fission's tremendous heat and life-threatening radiation.

So it's likely that Nautilus' crew didn't give much thought to the fact that they were ushering in the atomic age's next phase — and altering naval warfare forever — when they cast off their lines and flashed the now-historic message, "Underway On Nuclear Power."

Prior to Nautilus, submarines were powered by a dangerous combination of batteries (for submerged operations) and diesel engines (for surface operations and recharging the batteries). Because of noxious fumes, the diesel engines could only run while the subs were on (or near) the sea's surface, making them vulnerable to the enemy.

Naval nuclear power, under the leadership of Adm. Hyman Rickover, ended all that. Nautilus was able to remain submerged for months without surfacing. The only thing limiting Nautilus' undersea endurance was the crew's sanity and food supply.

Over the next several years, Nautilus shattered all submerged speed and distance records. For instance, in 1958, Nautilus dashed Pearl Harbor's top-secret orders to conduct "Operation Sunshine."

A few weeks later, with 116 men aboard, Nautilus proclaimed another record when it

broadcast: "Nautilus 90 North." Nautilus had reached the freezing waters of the geographic North Pole.

But Nautilus was followed by generations of nuclear submarines and, eventually, surface ships. Today, 11 of the Navy's 13 aircraft carriers are nuclear-powered.

Perhaps more important than man's harnessing of the atom to produce energy was the tectonic shift in warfare that came with Nautilus. Soviet spies could report the take-off of SAC nuclear bombers from their bases. And overhead satellites could monitor land-based ICBM sites. But now the United States would soon be able to send ballistic-missile nuclear submarines to sea, where they could remain undetected by the enemy for months at a time. This was real strategic deterrence, and no doubt had a hand in preventing a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

But some now say that the submarine is a Cold War relic. The Soviet Union is gone and the "Hunt for Red October" is over. Not so.

The Navy's 14 nuclear-powered ballis-

tic-missile submarines, each outfitted with 24 Trident nuclear-tipped ICBMs, continue to provide the United States with our strategic nuclear-strike and deterrent capability.

Meanwhile, nuclear subs provide the stealth and firepower needed in today's 24/7 battlespace. In fact, the Navy's 53 nuclear-powered attack submarines are some of our best spies. Operating close to shore, intelligence gathered by subs can provide timely information about the enemy's intentions.

Nautilus was decommissioned in 1980 after 25 years of service, logging just 500,000 miles. Today, nuclear-powered warships have safely steamed more than 119 million miles — equal to nearly 5,000 trips around the world.

The Navy itself operates 103 nuclear reactors — equaling the number of civilian commercial nuclear reactors in the United States — and its nuclear-safety record has been exemplary. Nuclear power enhances our Navy's ability to sail quickly to trouble spots, and arrive ready for action. The Navy's 82 nuclear-powered warships are the

mainstay of our forward presence and power projection strategy across the globe.

But perhaps most important, Nautilus is a testimony to the American pioneering spirit and boundless technical ingenuity. It should remind Americans of the importance of the endless pursuit of excellence and innovation — not to mention the tremendous professionalism and bravery of U.S. servicemen and -women past and present.

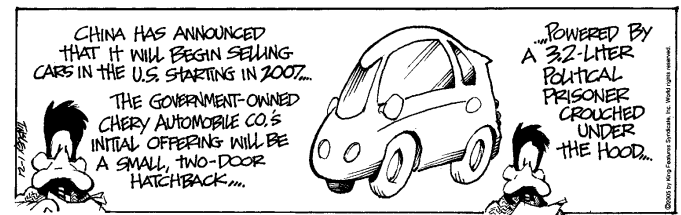
Such service is not without risk. The recent collision of the nuclear attack submarine USS San Francisco with an uncharted undersea mountain in the western Pacific near Guam is a stark reminder of the dangers of the U.S. Navy's "silent service." But submarine duty remains essential to America's security in these dangerous times.

So, to our brave submariners on this important anniversary: Run silent, run deep — and thanks for a job well done.

Peter Brookes is a commander with the Navy Reserve. He is a Naval Academy graduate and a former EP-3 pilot. He is also a senior fellow with The Heritage Foundation, a Washington-based think tank.

Mallard Fillmore

BY BRUCE TINSLEY



IN THE STATES

Rice vows 'debate' as secretary of state

BY BARRY SCHWEID

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Trying to make their mark on President Bush's strategy for Iraq, Senate Democrats extracted a promise from Condoleezza Rice to level with them when she takes over as secretary of state.

And Rice seems agreeable, to a point.

"We can certainly have, I think, a healthy debate about the course that we should take going forward," she said Wednesday in response to Democrats who criticized Bush's rationale for over-



Rice

Rice promised. "My assessments may not always be ones that you want to hear. They may not always be the ones with which you agree. But I will tell you what I

throwing Saddam Hussein and his handling of a postwar insurgency—that is taking a growing toll of American soldiers in Iraq."

think."

And that, she said, "is a promise that I make to you today."

Rice coupled the promise with an admission that some Bush administration decisions in Iraq were bad ones, but she did not elaborate or give ground on the principal elements of the administration's policy there.

Critics on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, only two of whom — Democrats John Kerry of Massachusetts and Barbara Boxer of California — voted against her confirmation, clearly were hoping that Rice would act

as a check on Bush.

Their criticism is likely to carry over to next week when Democrats will speak on the nomination on the Senate floor on Tuesday, with a vote likely the next day.

Initially, Rice had looked forward to confirmation Thursday a few hours after President Bush took the oath of office for a second term.

White House chief of staff Andrew Card said Thursday the Democrats' decision to delay her confirmation smacked of "petty politics."

"She certainly is qualified and ready to be the secretary of state," he said on CBS' "The Early Show."

The Democrats' motivation in seeking exchanges with Rice is apparent. They hope that by engaging Rice in a debate of some kind, they might be able to influence policy.

They seemed to have Colin Powell, her predecessor, in mind. His reputation for taking strong stands even if they conflicted with what Bush was hearing from other advisers made him popular on Capitol Hill, although he never did more than hint at having a divergent point of view.

San Francisco considering gun ban to stanch homicides

BY KIM CURTIS

The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Frustrated by an increase in homicides, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has proposed a sweeping ban on handguns, injecting this liberal city into the national debate over gun control.

The proposal would bar residents from keeping handguns in their homes or businesses and prohibit the sale, manufacture and distribution of any firearms or ammunition in San Francisco.

Only two other major U.S. cities — Washington and Chicago — have implemented handgun bans, and both were quickly challenged in the courts. The national gun lobby already has vowed to challenge San Francisco's ban if voters approve it.

San Francisco has tried before to ban handguns. In 1982, a city ordinance was overturned because it applied to anyone who entered the city. A state court ruled that such actions were reserved for the state Legislature.

The supervisor who proposed the most recent ban, Chris Daly, said he and his counterparts already have received threatening calls and e-mails from gun supporters.

"Up to this point, I don't think anyone has come up with anything that's working," Daly said. "This is my contribution to trying to figure out a way to turn back the tide of violence."

San Francisco had 88 murders in 2004, up from 69 in 2003.

Sixty-three of last year's homicides involved a firearm, police Sgt. Neville Gittens said. The city has averaged 71 homicides a year for the past decade, from a low of 58 in 1998 to a high of 99 in 1995. About 77,000 people live in San Francisco, according to the 2000 census.

While last year's number of homicides is an increase from the previous year, it's comparable to other U.S. cities of similar size — roughly 750,000 residents. In 2003, for example, Jacksonville, Fla., had 92 murders and Indianapolis had 112.

Chuck Michel, a Los Angeles lawyer who represents the National Rifle Association and the California Rifle and Pistol Association, said San Francisco's plan is ill-conceived and misplanned.

"It's turning firearms into a scapegoat for failed city policies," Michel said. "Criminals are never going to have any kind of problem getting the kind of guns they want."

Michel said he's preparing a legal challenge, claiming a ban would violate the Second Amendment and that cities do not have the authority to regulate firearms.

If approved by a majority of the city's voters in November, the law would take effect in January 2006. Residents, who have bought nearly 22,000 handguns since 1996, would have 90 days to relinquish their weapons. The ban would make an exception for police officers, security guards, military personnel and others who require guns for their job.

Gun-control opponents argue such bans elsewhere have had little or no long-term effect.

Washington banned handguns in 1976 and had an immediate 25 percent drop in firearm-related homicides, according to a 1991 study that appeared in the New England Journal of Medicine. The number of homicides fell from 13 per month to about 10.

In later years, however, the district became notorious for its violent-crime rate. Last year, the district had 248 homicides, or 207 per month — a rate of 44 homicides per 100,000



Two pedestrians walk in front of High Bridge Arms gun store on Mission Street in San Francisco. Struck by a 28 percent increase in homicides during the past year, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors has proposed a sweeping measure banning handguns.

residents. By comparison, San Francisco, has a rate of 9.2. Daly, who hails from the Washington area, said it's unfair to compare the two cities. The district faces greater poverty, unemployment and "serious social issues that I wouldn't expect the majority of pro-gun America to understand," he said.

Hunt terror suspects

BOSTON — Authorities have launched a manhunt across the Northeast for four Chinese nationals and two Iraqis described by the FBI as potential terror suspects who may be heading for Boston.

Authorities insisted that there was no confirmed threat.

Federal law enforcement officials said they had received a tip Wednesday about an unspecified threat against Boston, and released photographs of the two Chinese men and two women they were seeking.

A Transportation Security Administration official said a security briefing indicated the FBI also was looking for two Iraqis.

Confirmation delayed

WASHINGTON — Attorney General designate Alberto Gonzales will have to wait several weeks before getting a Senate committee vote on his nomination to be the nation's top law enforcement officer.

Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee decided Wednesday to ask for a one-week hold on Gonzales' nomination.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., said the committee should not vote on Gonzales yet because the nominee has not yet answered all of the Democrats' questions.

Spellings agreement

WASHINGTON — The law-maker who has stalled Margaret Spellings' nomination to be education secretary agreed on Wednesday to allow a confirmation vote after she promised to review promotional tactics that have the department under fire.

At issue are steps taken to promote President Bush's education law. The Education Department hired a public relations firm and paid for advertising and access with a prominent commentator.

"I made clear to Ms. Spellings these proposals are efforts at the Department of Education must stop," Sen. Frank Lautenberg told The Associated Press.

The Government Accountability Office is trying to determine whether the department violated a federal ban on propaganda.

From The Associated Press

Firms report problems at exit polls in 2004

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Two firms that conducted Election Day exit polls for major news organizations reported Wednesday that they found a number of problems about the way the polls were carried out last year, resulting in estimates that overstated John Kerry's sliver of the vote.

Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International found that the Democratic challenger's sup-

porters were more likely than President Bush's supporters to participate in exit poll interviews.

They also found that more errors occurred in exit polls conducted by younger interviewers, and half of the interviewers were 34 or under. The polling firms laid out their findings to the consortium of news organizations, known as the National Election Pool.

The news organizations — ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News

and The Associated Press — formed the consortium to get exit polling data for the 2004 election after a previous group known as the Voter News Service was disbanded. Edison and Mitofsky said problems contributed to exit poll data that overstated the vote for Kerry nationally and in 26 states, while data for four states overstated the vote for Bush.

They noted that in a number of precincts, interviewers were kept

50 feet or more away from polling places, potentially skewing results toward people motivated to go out of their way to participate in exit polls. They also found suggestions that interviewers may not have carefully followed rules for selecting voters at random, which may have skewed results.

Despite the problems, the firms noted that they still made correct calls for all races on election night.

Fla., La. gay marriages

TAMPA, Fla. — After 27 years together, the Rev. Nancy Wilson and Paula Schoenwetter got married last summer in Massachusetts, along with thousands of other same-sex couples who wanted their unions legalized.

Massachusetts is the only state that allows gay marriage, but Wilson and Schoenwetter want their home state of Florida to recognize their union, too. Their attempt to get that recognition, though, was soundly rejected Wednesday when a judge dismissed their lawsuit, upholding a federal law that lets states ban same-sex marriages.

The ruling was described by legal experts as the first of its kind.

"This is a legal shot heard 'round the world," said attorney Ellis Rubin, who filed the lawsuit on the women's behalf. "But we are not giving up. ... This case is going to be resolved in the U.S. Supreme Court, and I have said that since the day I filed it."

Also Wednesday, the Louisiana Supreme Court unanimously reinstated an anti-gay marriage amendment to the state constitution that was overwhelmingly approved by voters in September.

Wilson, a minister for Metropolitan Community Churches, one of the world's largest congregations of gay Christians, said in a statement that she was prepared to take her challenge to the Supreme Court.

"Despite this ruling, we are still married in our hearts, and legally married in Massachusetts," she said. Her partner added: "No civil rights movement was lost on one bad court decision."

The women argued the Defense of Marriage Act was unconstitutional because it was discriminatory on the basis of sex and violated their fundamental rights.

U.S. District Judge James S. Moody said he could not declare marriage a "fundamental right," as the lawsuit urged him to do, and that he was bound to follow legal precedent.

Some drinking good

WASHINGTON — Women

who imbibe a little wine, beer or spirits every day are less likely than teetotalers to see their memories and other thinking powers fade as they age, according to the largest study to assess alcohol's impact on the brain.

The study of more than 12,000 elderly women found that those who consumed light to moderate amounts of alcohol daily had about a 20 percent lower risk of experiencing problems with their mental abilities later in life.

"Low levels of alcohol appear to have cognitive benefits," said Francine Grodstein of the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, senior author on the study, which is being published in Thursday's New England Journal

of Medicine.

Cancer now top killer

MILWAUKEE, Wis. — Cancer has taken over heart disease as the top killer in the United States of people 85 and younger.

The reason is that deaths from both diseases are falling, but heart disease mortality has declined more.

"It's dropping fast enough that another disease is eclipsing it," said Dr. Walter Tsou, president of the American Public Health Association.

The news is included in the American Cancer Society's annual statistical report, released Wednesday. In 2002, the most recent year for which information is available, 476,009 Americans younger than 85 died of cancer; 450,637 died of heart disease.

Bible advertisement

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Rolling Stone magazine declined to run an advertisement for a new translation of the Bible aimed at young people, America's largest Bible publisher said.

Zondervan, a division of HarperCollins Publishers, bought space in the magazine months ago as part of an ad campaign for Today's New International Version, Doug Lockhart, Zondervan's executive vice president of marketing, said Wednesday.

False health charges

TUSTIN, Calif. — A health supplement company agreed to pay \$3.6 million to settle civil charges it misled consumers by marketing a product it claimed helped prevent and treat cancer and AIDS.

Body Wise International Inc.'s ads on the Internet and product promotion at seminars violated California's Health and Safety Code provisions on product claims, investigators said.

Bacteria in water

WASHINGTON — Coliform bacteria are showing up in the water systems of more airlines than last summer, when the government first took steps toward requiring sanitation improvements.

The Environmental Protection Agency will now have domestic airlines test themselves and submit results to the agency to see if the trend continues.

Coliform bacteria, usually harmless, indicate that harmful organisms could be present.

Calling for sources

NEW YORK — The U.S. government should be given access to telephone records of two New York Times reporters who used confidential sources in articles about Islamic charities, a federal prosecutor argued.

Patrick Fitzgerald said two Islamic charities, Holy Land Foundation of Texas and Global Relief Foundation in Illinois, were effectively forewarned of government raids when a Times reporter called the charities for comment shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

From wire services

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Fatal fall for senior

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A 91-year-old man died after falling off a tour boat into the San Francisco Bay.

Searchers combed the bay for more than six hours before a Coast Guard helicopter spotted the body of Man Yai Yu, authorities said.

Yu, of San Francisco, had been among seven passengers on the Harbor Queen for a one-hour trip.

No sign of snowshoer

CO MESA — Authorities have called off the search for a snowshoer missing since storms dropped several feet of snow on the 10,500-foot-high Grand Mesa, a Mesa County sheriff's spokeswoman said.

Dan Walker, 54, was last seen after separating from his wife and daughter to seek help after they got lost on a backcountry outing. Searchers had found Dan Walker's ski poles earlier in the week and an erratic trail leading away from them, but they found no trace of him.

The search area that we have others is closely defined," sheriff's spokeswoman Susan McBurney said. "The sheriff's office strongly believes that if Daniel was in that area, we would have been able to find him."

Walker's wife, Deborah, and the couple's 18-year-old daughter, Camille, were rescued, along with their dog. They had taken shelter under a tree their first night, and then dug a snow cave for the second night.

Gummen crash party

FL HIALEAH — Two gummen crashed a girl's 15th birthday party, shooting two teenagers to death and injuring another in a back yard crowded with revelers, police said.

One suspect was in custody. The men apparently had a previous dispute with some of the party-goers, Hialeah police spokesman Jose Caragol said. When the two showed up at the party, some of the revelers threw beer bottles at them to force them to leave.

Alvaro Trana, 19, died at the scene, while another teen died at a hospital. The other teen's name was withheld while police were trying to contact his family. Jonathan Aleman, 17, was hit by a bullet but was expected to recover fully, Caragol said.

Tour van stolen

HI HONOLULU — A man stole a tour van left idling at a beach park with four people inside, but eventually let the four go unharmed, police said.

The van had been left running at Kahe Point Beach Park in Oahu while the driver and three tourists stepped out to admire the view, police said.

Anthony Lopez of Colorado said he and three friends were dozing in the van when a man slid into the driver's seat and sped out of the parking lot. The man agreed to free them after Lopez begged him to let him go.

He threatened me with the knife and tried to get me to leave the girls and I just pled with him to please let me have the girls,"



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Lopez said.

Lopez said the girls were getting out when a second man pulled up in a blue sedan and shoved him into the bushes. The car then followed the van up a highway.

Police recovered the van, which had been abandoned, but said the victims' belongings were stolen.

African elephant dies

IL CHICAGO — The oldest African elephant in the United States has died at the Lincoln Park Zoo at the age of 55, officials said. Zoo keepers found the 9,000-pound female elephant named Peaches sprawled on the floor of an indoor enclosure. The elephant's eyes weren't focused and she was breathing with difficulty, zoo officials said.

Veterinarians could not get her back on her feet and euthanized her hours later.

Kelly McGrath, a zoo spokeswoman, said the median life expectancy for African elephants in the wild is thought to be around 42. The zoo acquired Peaches and two other African elephants, Taima and Wanki, from the San Diego Zoo in 2003.

Rape charges for women

MA NORTHAMPTON — Two women, including a Smith College student, pleaded innocent to charges they raped and handcuffed another female student and



Church in flames

Boston firefighters spray water on the remains of the First Baptist Church in Boston's Jamaica Plain section. The church, which was built in 1859, was badly damaged in a 1975 arson fire but had been rebuilt. The cause of the blaze was under investigation.

slashed her with knives.

Rachel Ann Klobertanz, 22, and Augusta Claire Kendall, 22, were ordered held on \$2,500 cash bail at their arraignment in Northampton District Court. Both were charged with two counts of aggravated rape, three counts of assault and battery, assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and aggravated assault and battery.

Prosecutor Susan Loehn said the three women first met at a downtown Northampton bar. They then went back to Klobertanz and Kendall's apartment, where they drank several bottles of champagne and engaged in sex that began as consensual but ended as rape, Loehn said.

Loehn said it was not the first time women have been charged with rape in Northampton, but the case was unusual because of the level of violence involved.

Damaged barges

OH REEDSVILLE — Barge traffic on a 42-mile stretch of the Ohio River was curtailed and businesses prepared for the lowest water levels since the late 1800s as salvage crews worked to remove twisted barges from control gates at the Bellevue Lock and Dam.

The barges are keeping the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from closing all eight gates, which controls the amount of water in the navigation pool from Bellevue to the Willow Island Lock and Dam above Parkersburg, W.Va.

The barges were among nine loaded coal barges that broke loose after the vessel Jon J. Strong locked through the dam on Jan. 6 during flooding along the river.

ATV defect settlement

DC WASHINGTON — Minnesota-based Polaris Industries Inc. has agreed to pay nearly \$1 million to settle allegations it blatantly reported defects and hazards on some of its all-terrain vehicles, the first such penalty involving ATVs, the government announced.

The defects were linked to dozens of accidents and at least 25 injuries from December 1998 to February 2001, including burns, torn muscles, scrapes and bruises, the Consumer Product Safety Commission said.

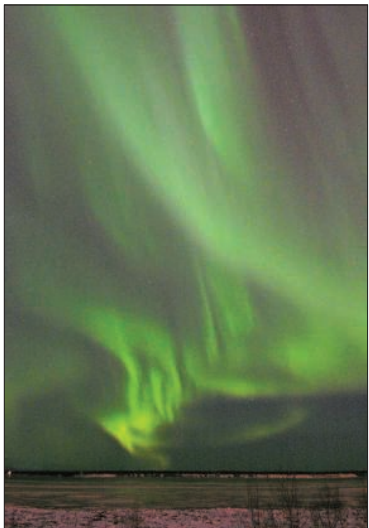
Hall of Fame sued again

PA SHARON — A businessman who helped start the Vocal Group Hall of Fame has filed his third lawsuit in less than a month against the foundation and chief executive now in charge.

The latest suit filed by James E. Winner Jr. seeks the return of assets and memorabilia worth more than \$150,000 that Winner contends were removed from the museum.

The museum, about 60 miles northwest of Pittsburgh, closed its doors last year amid financial troubles and canceled its 2004 inductions.

Winner, who owns the company that makes The Chet vehicle anti-theft device, has sued the hall and its foundation for repayment of a \$10,000 loan and claims he is owed \$50,000 in back taxes.



Northern lights

The aurora borealis appears over upper Cook Inlet in Anchorage, Alaska.



What do you want?

A bear trying to hibernate in a tree during sub-zero temperatures caught the eye of Peshigo, Wis., residents who kept the large cub away from the bear may have been confused or kicked out of its den by its mother.



Snow creations

lage in Kalispell, Mont.

Alex Lloyd creates a snow angel while her brothers and sisters build a snowman vil-



Overcrowding

Students from St. Louis University form a sled train as they move down the icy slope of St. Louis' Art Hill in Forest Park.



Such a nag

A male Canada goose is a constant companion for a goat on a farm owned by Poldi and Horst Schmitt in Napa, Calif. The goose arrived in 2002 and now lives with the goat herd. The goose adopted the female goat, keeping all other goats, except her offspring, away from her.



Icy covering

Iceicles created by extremely cold temperatures give a new look to a fountain at a North Wales, Pa., private residence.



Alone on the path

Keather Krajic walks along the Centennial Trail on her way to class at North Idaho College in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Hockey dad charged

MA BOSTON — A Swampscott man already banned from youth hockey games will face a criminal charge next month for allegedly grabbing, shaking and cursing at his son's 8-year-old teammate.

Jordan Waldman, 51, appeared in Peabody District Court but waived his right to a hearing with the clerk magistrate, who was trying to determine if a criminal charge would be filed in the case.

His decision not to tell his side of the story resulted in the clerk magistrate charging Waldman with assault and battery, for which Waldman will be arraigned on Feb. 25.

Waldman allegedly grabbed 8-year-old Cameron Byrne by the shirt, yanked him forward, and yelled at him after the boy and Waldman's son had been in an on-ice shoving match on Dec. 26. The boy reportedly was uninjured.

Waste deal questioned

VA RICHMOND — An environmental group is asking a court to throw out a confidential deal in which a waste company agreed to pay Virginia \$1 for each ton of trash it barged into the state.

In the deal, state officials also agreed to push for a method favored by Waste Management Inc. of testing huge waste containers to determine whether they are watertight. The test calls for filling a container with 2 feet of water and checking for leaks, but the James River Association favored a more stringent air-pressure test.

The association said the agreement, which was reached in December 2002 to settle a lawsuit, made a sham out of the public-comment period required before the rules were adopted.

During a public hearing in the spring of 2003, many people, unaware of the deal already reached, called for a \$5-to-\$10 fee and a tougher test.

Can't smoke and golf?

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A proposed new law that would ban smoking in recreation areas regulated by the city may include public golf courses.

The ordinance, drafted by Supervisor Michela Alioto-Pier, originally was written to ban "inhaling, exhaling, burning or carrying any lighted smoking equipment for tobacco or any other weed or plant" in all outdoor recreation areas, including parks, gardens, piers and playing fields.

It was later amended to exempt golf courses, because course operators fear losing revenue and forfeiting their competitive edge in luring tournaments to town.

But Supervisor Chris Daly said he was considering amending the ban when it reaches the board on Jan. 25 to include golf courses. "It doesn't seem like there is a good policy argument to exclude golf courses for fiscal reasons," he said.

Gun bill reintroduced

RI PROVIDENCE — Democratic state Rep. Joanne Giannini reintroduced a bill that would require people subject to domestic violence restraining orders to turn in their guns to police or sell them to licensed gun dealers. An identical proposal died in a Senate committee last year.

New base terminal

GA FORT BENNING — Fort Benning has opened a new 75,000-square-foot airport terminal. Instead of taking a three-hour bus ride to Warner Robins Air Force Base to board a plane, soldiers now can wait comfortably in the \$17.7 million facility before flying out at Fort Benning's Lawson Army Airfield. The new facility can hold up to 1,500 troops.

Reprieve for sick inmate

TX DALLAS — An elderly man who served more than 40 years in prison on a long conviction has received a medical reprieve from a nearly three-decade-old arrest warrant.

Robert Carroll Coney, 76, of Dallas, was released in August after his 1962 Angelina County robbery conviction was ruled a case of mistaken identity.

He was arrested in December on a 1976 warrant accusing him of escaping from a Georgia prison. He had been serving an eight- to 10-year sentence in Georgia for forging checks.

Coney suffers from diabetes, blindness and a heart condition. He will remain under supervised restrictions, similar to those on parole.

Water system expansion

OH PUT-IN-BAY — A Lake Erie resort island where 1,400 visitors came to win a gastrointestinal illness in June plans to expand its water system to all businesses on the island.

State health officials believe the illnesses in South Bass Island were caused by malfunctioning septic systems that contaminated more than 40 private wells that served some of the island's inns, wineries and bars.

The illnesses were a blow to tourism on the island, which draws about 500,000 annually.

The \$5.2 million expansion of the water system in Put-In-Bay, the island's village, should take up to three years, said village administrator David Gruet. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency must approve the plan.

Plea in brothel case

ME PORTLAND — A former bookkeeper for a Kittery health club alleged to be a brothel has pleaded guilty to conspiracy to launder more than \$3 million for the club.

Mary Ann Manzoli, 64, of Lynnfield, Mass., is the widow of one of the former owners of the Kittery Health Club, also known as the Danish Health Club.

She now faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. A sentencing date has not been scheduled.

Federal authorities allege that the club, which advertised itself as a massage parlor, served for 20 years as a place where male customers paid to have sex with women.

Court documents say Manzoli regularly wrote paychecks for the club's managers and paid bills for utilities, laundry and heating oil. She also authorized payments for advertisements in the adult entertainment section of the Boston Phoenix, and other magazines distributed in strip clubs and adult bookstores, court records show.

Stories and photos from wire services

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YOUR MONEY

Google offers new freebie

Company's latest gamble is a no-charge photo service

BY CHRIS GAITHER

Los Angeles Times

SAN FRANCISCO — A new version of Picasa, Google Inc.'s digital photo software, is due for release Tuesday, offering additional ways to edit, print and share pictures.

It also has a feature that Web surfers have come to expect from Google: It's free.

Google acquired the company behind Picasa in July, and immediately slashed the price of its software from \$30 to nothing. When Picasa co-founder Lars Perkins asked Google executives how the software would make money, he recalled, they told him, "Don't worry about it."

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A publicly traded company needs advertising nearly all its services may make sense. But people who watch the company closely say there could be a method to the madness.

One theory is that Google is throwing out a swarm of ideas and hoping one will become its next billion-dollar business. After all, Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page created the search engine as Stanford University graduate students and attracted millions of users before deciding to sell advertisements to run alongside search results.

Those ads have turned Google into one of the Internet's most profitable companies. The Mountain View, Calif.-based firm posted a profit of \$106 mil-

lion on sales of \$1.5 billion in 2003. Its 2004 sales are expected to double its profit to triple when Google reports earnings Feb. 1.

Now, said Mark Mahaney, an analyst with investment firm American Technology Research, the Internet giant seems to be taking a "Field of Dreams" approach: Build it, and they will come — Google will worry about how to cash in later.

"With almost every other company, I would say that's unerring," he said. "But I guess they've got enough of a revenue and profit engine now that that's excusable."

And when Picasa users print a photo with the latest version of the software, they will see a button that takes them to Froogle, Google's online store, for ink cartridges and other printer supplies.

Picasa didn't have the luxury of giving away its software when it was part of Ideablab, the high-tech incubator in Pasadena, Calif., that initially funded the photo services company. To Ideablab Chief Executive Bill Gross, Picasa seems like one piece in Google's grand plan to house people's e-mail, photos and other digital files in addition to launching their Web searches.

"I think Google wants to be the place where you store your life," he said.

"What they're doing is brilliant. They are using each of their services to promote their other services."

"We're a profitable company," said Alan Eustace, a vice president of engineering. "We can afford to try things that might elude other users."

The company may add advertising to some products. With others, another approach to making money might become apparent. And some ideas will never make a dime, but Google executives claim not to mind.

"We care about our shareholders and maximizing value," Eustace said. "But our company would make very poor decisions if we looked at everything through the lens of making money."

Don't let salesmen bully your car buy

Dear Tom and Ray:

I have been trying to buy a new Toyota Prius. Recently, two Southeast Florida dealers have told me they're in short supply. They both say they'll put me on the waiting list if I give them a deposit of \$1,000 and agree to pay \$5,000 above

the sticker price. Frankly, that ticks me off. Why is doing right by the environment becoming so difficult? I do not want to buy a car soon. Please answer before I do something crazy, like buy a Hummer! — Nurgun

RAY: This is what's known as price gouging, Nurgun. It's done by short-sighted dealers who don't realize that someday they might have more cars than customers, rather than the other way around. And the manufacturer can't legally prevent its dealers from doing this. It's only allowed to "suggest" prices (hence, the manufacturer's suggested retail price).

TOM: You know those dealers are only going to use your \$5,000 to buy a bigger power boat, which will only further add to the pollution in Florida.

RAY: So, if you really want to help the environment, here's what I suggest: Buy a resale Honda Civic, which gets 30 mpg anyway.

TOM: Then take that \$5,000 and do the following: Put aside \$1,000 to pay for the difference in gasoline costs throughout the life of the Civic versus the Prius.

RAY: Then take \$1,000 and do

note it to your favorite environmental organization.

TOM: And then, with the remaining \$3,000, hire a picketer to walk outside each of these dealerships with a big sign that says "This Dealership Gouges Its Customers. Shop Elsewhere."

RAY: The rate of \$7 an hour; you can put someone at each dealership for a half a year's worth of Saturdays, marching back and forth in front of the parking lot with that sign.

TOM: You'll be helping to punish an unscrupulous dealer, and you'll be providing employment for some poor man or woman who needs it.

RAY: Alternatively, you could shop for a Honda Civic Hybrid, assuming your local Honda dealer isn't pulling the same kinds of tricks. Or wait until fall for the Honda Accord Hybrid to come out.

TOM: Or you can go to www.cartalk.com and use the new-car-search feature to look for another Toyota dealer within driving range who will sell you the car at sticker price.

RAY: If you buy it that way, you can still take it back to these other rip-off artists to have the free warranty work done — and drink their waiting-room coffee. Good luck, Nurgun.

Got a question about cars? Write to Click and Click in care of this newspaper, or e-mail them by visiting the Car Talk section of cars.com on the World Wide Web. Distributed by Jet Features Syndicate Inc.

Click and Click

Tom and Ray Magliozzi

WEDNESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES					
52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg
10,638.07	9,708.40	Dow Jones Industrials	10,579.97	-88.82	-84
3,783.46	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,552.68	-36.74	-102
337.79	274.33	Dow Jones Utilities	338.88	-68	-20
6,211.33	5,213.31	NYSE Composite	5,059.27	-56.28	-78
4,037.46	3,150.14	Amex Index	3,145.42	-57.8	-141
3,919.6	1,750.12	Nasdaq Composite	2,047.59	-32.45	-154
1,217.90	1,069.73	S&P 500	1,184.63	-13.53	-95
666.98	548.27	S&P MidCap	640.41	-58.95	-91
1,158.74	959.86	Nasdaq 100	1,041.11	-65.96	-57
12,024.36	7,258.53	DJ Wilshire 5000	11,627.80	-108.08	-93

FACES

Darth Tater strikes back

A spud on the dark side.
That's how toy maker Hasbro Inc. is promoting its latest Mr. Potato Head figure, Darth Tater.



Darth Tater

The toy spud will be available next month, ahead of the May release of "Star Wars: Episode III — Revenge of the Sith," the latest installment in the film series.

Darth Tater will come with a light saber, cape and helmet, in addition to the regular Mr. Potato Head accessories such as eyes, mouth and nose.

The toy will retail for \$7.99.

"Star Wars: Episode III," starring Ewan McGregor, Hayden Christensen and Natalie Portman, will open in theaters nationwide on May 19.

Inspired in Alabama

Three celebrities from Alabama have agreed to serve as role models for students in career and technical education programs.



Jackson

The Alabama Board of Education passed resolutions last week commending

Courtney Cox Arquette, former professional football and baseball star Bo Jackson and pop singer Lionel Richie for agreeing to be role models for career and technical education students. All three celebrities attended public schools in Alabama.

All that jazz auction

A treasure trove of jazz memorabilia — including saxophones that belonged to Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, Dizzy Gillespie's trumpet and a gown that Peggy Lee wore when she sang "Fever" — will go on the auction block next month.

"It's the first truly major auction focusing on jazz," Arlan Ertzinger, president of Guernsey's, which is holding the Feb. 20 auction, said Tuesday.

The auction will take place at the Time Warner Center in Manhattan, the new home of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and buyers can bid by telephone, through the online auction site eBay or in person.

Smells like a motorcycle

What would a fragrance inspired by the Discovery Channel's "American Chopper" smell like? Not like the gasoline or burned rubber you may smell at Orange County Choppers, where the show's father-and-son team build custom-made motorcycles for upward of \$100,000, according to Michael Malcom, a fragrance developer and marketer from Manitou Springs, Colo.

Malcom's product line, Full Throttle, smells like a mix of essences of anise, mint, black licorice, white pepper and hints of suede and cashmere.

He pitched the idea to agents of "American Chopper" stars Paul Teutul and his son, Paul Jr., after watching the program last January. Full Throttle is based on fragrances favored by Paul Jr.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

HEARING
"WHITE NOISE"

Michael Keaton returns in new paranormal thriller

By TERRY ARMOUR

Chicago Tribune

CHICAGO

Michael Keaton is seated in the lobby restaurant of Chicago's Peninsula Hotel, not far from a table of bantering elderly women.

"What would you do if you found out that one of these ladies sitting over there was carrying for the Colombian drug cartel?" the actor quips with his trademark leer as he gestures over there.

One of the women notices Keaton, pointing the actor out to the others at her table. But they appear to be having a hard time figuring out exactly who he is. This fact isn't lost on Keaton, who after a string of big-screen hits, including "Night Shift," "Mr. Mom," "Beetlejuice" and the first two "Batman" films, has kept a low profile in Hollywood since 1998's "Jack Frost."

"I didn't check out, exactly," Keaton said during a recent interview. "That sounds too weird."

Was it a sabbatical? "Even that sounds too weird," the actor said as he took a sip of wine.

"I actually wish the story was more interesting but I'm ridiculously honest. I just needed a break."

The break is over for the 53-year-old Keaton, who stars in the new paranormal thriller "White Noise," about an architect who communicates with his dead wife through Electronic Voice Phenomenon (EVP). The movie is now playing in the States.

In the coming months, Keaton also stars in "Game 6," about a playwright who skips opening night to watch Game 6

of the 1986 World Series between the Boston Red Sox and New York Mets, and "Herbie: Fully Loaded," the latest adventure of the little white Volkswagen.

Q. Did you make a conscious effort in

your career to mix up your roles? After a couple of successful comedies, you took a chance on the drama "Clean and Sober," which led to "Batman."

A. I really thought that was my job when I started doing this — to try different things. Also, I have a low — low, low, low — boredom threshold. I just thought, "I've got to keep myself interested; otherwise, I don't really care to do this."

I guess that's why I don't work a lot. I kind of disappeared there for a minute.

Q. Talk about that.

A. Somebody said, "Man, you haven't done anything for a long time; we haven't heard from you in a while." The truth is, it's kind of consistent with me.

I don't want to call it unpredictability — that sounds too self-conscious to me. Like when people say, "You're kind of a renegade, aren't you?" Once you start saying, "I'm a renegade," then you're full of crap. If you

have to say you're a renegade, then you're not a renegade.

Q. So why did you disappear?

A. (Laughs) I guess I could say, "You know, man, I went to this cabin and found myself," but I didn't do anything like that. It's really quite simple: I had a European girlfriend. I love Europe, I spent time in Europe. I built a couple of houses. I ranched. I fished in South America. I just lived life.

Q. Did you need to get away from the business or did the roles stop coming your way?

A. The truth is that it was 70-30 — 70 percent of, "I don't want

to do that; I'm never going to do that again. I'm too old now to play that without looking stupid; I know other guys that can do that one better than I can; I've already done that." The other 30 percent was that I wanted a nice, juicy role and I didn't get offered it because some guy's movie made \$100 million. That's how it works. That guy is getting it before I am because the studio is saying, "I've got to make a profit." It's a business, dude. I know I'm not going to get certain things, but I'm totally cool with how I do things. Hell, I may disappear again.

Q. So you never became disenchanted with the movie business?

A. (The movie) industry is a strip mall and I figured that out a long time ago.

The studio has to have an anchor store in the mall, like the Nordstrom's, and that's your "Spider-Man." Then there are the other stores, your independents. Movies are a corporate business. That's the reality and I live in that reality.

Q. It's been reported that you turned down about \$35 million to do a third "Batman" movie.

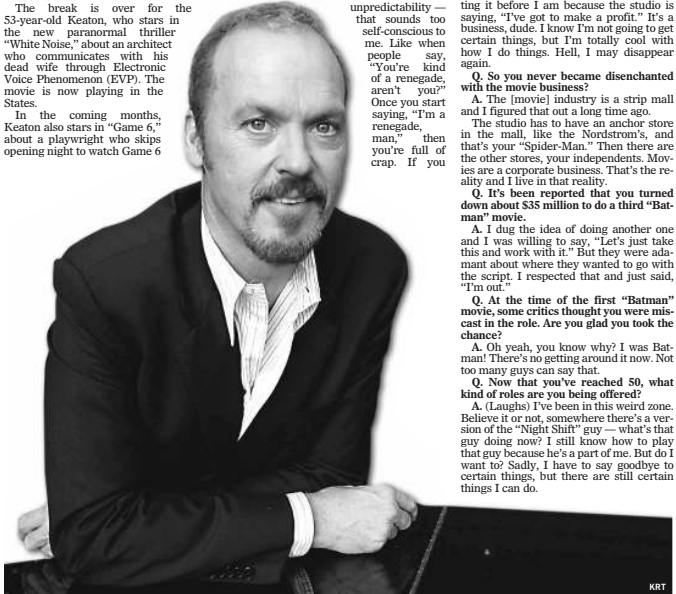
A. I dug the idea of doing another one and I was willing to say, "Let's just take this and work with it." But they were adamant about where they wanted to go with the script. I respected that and just said, "I'm out."

Q. At the time of the first "Batman" movie, some critics thought you were miscast in the role. Are you glad you took the chance?

A. Oh yeah, you know why? I was Batman! There's no getting around it now. Not too many guys can say that.

Q. Now that you've reached 50, what kind of roles are you being offered?

A. (Laughs) I've been in this weird zone. Believe it or not, somewhere there's a version of the "Night Shift" guy — what's that guy doing now? I still know how to play that guy because he's a part of me. But do I want to? Sadly, I have to say goodbye to certain things, but there are still certain things I can do.



KURT

Horoscope

The Gemini moon rules the early and most productive hours of the day. Do all you can before the moon goes void in the afternoon. Suddenly, a logy feeling takes hold, and if you can afford to take a nap, this may be the most effective use of a few hours. Aquari-inspired dreams are vividly fantastic. Share subliminal insights with friends.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

JANUARY 21. Your genius expands this year. Dedicate yourself to following your interests through the rest of the winter. You're attractive when engaged in forward motion on a re-imagining project. Love bows you over in February. You'll be making a key life-changing decision in April. Travel in June or October. Love signs are Virgo and Aquarius.

ARIES (March 21-April 19).

Your instinct for making a buck is well honed. Concern yourself with the stuff from which fortunes are made — profits, products and services brought to the marketplace. Pleasant surprises come tonight.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20).

Check in often with your mirror. You'll benefit from a face-to-face pep talk between you and you. It's not vain! Make the distinction between self-consciousness and self-awareness.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21).

Do whatever it takes to feel vital and a part of things. Others may reveal secrets, and you are proud to keep it on the lowdown. This does take some doing, though, since what you learn is so juicy.

CANCER (June 22-July 22).

You're still searching for that person who is really on your wavelength. A sassy attitude attracts like — so emotive! In the meantime, try and relate to those around you. Old friends offer new opportunities.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).

Shrewd strategies are needed to compete in your current work environment.

Know your opponent. A Nigerian proverb applies: "When the mouse laughs at the cat, there is a hole nearby."

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

Childish energy runs you — it's kind of charming. You could even develop a crush. Whatever you do, don't tell lies. They will quickly envelop you like a sticky spider web.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).

If today had a soundtrack, it would include the comical plucking of a banjo. The music gets faster and faster, and you dance frantically in an effort to keep time. Laugh about it, and you're brilliant.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 19).

Your money sense lights up with killer ideas and lots of motivation. It's like you're in Economics 101 and the rest of the class is still playing with crayons. Act on your inspiration immediately.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).

Environmental issues shape your progress. Probably your work setup is still not conducive to maximum output. A Virgo or Aquarius can help. Make changes, and production will soar.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).

Relationships require so much practical attention that you may channel your inner Tina Turner, crying: "What's love got to do with it?" Remedy the situation by injecting some old-fashioned romance into the equation.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).

Interpersonal skills are hot. Getting people to do the right thing is easy for you — everyone seems to want to please you. You're not being graded in a relationship, but if you were, you'd get an "A".

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).

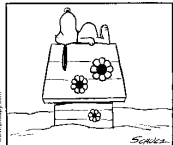
It's appealing to tangle with the authority figure. Flawing your inner teen is thrilling and perhaps foolish, but you can't help yourself. Could it be your real issue is with your father?

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



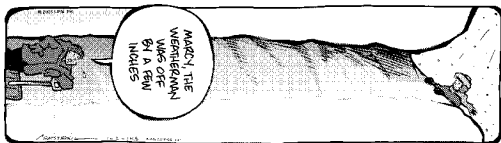
Peanuts



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



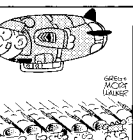
Cathy



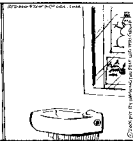
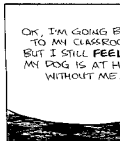
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



Fotrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



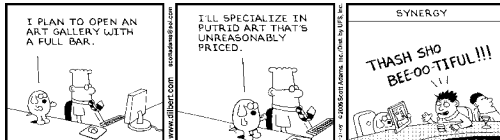
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



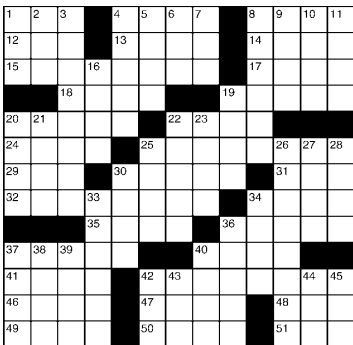
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Upper-crust newbie
- 4 Mexican peninsula, for short
- 8 Binges
- 12 Pub order
- 13 Word often following "once"
- 14 Pennsylvania port
- 15 Muezzins' towers
- 17 Exhaust
- 18 Hoodoo
- 19 Church rendition
- 20 Inaugurate
- 22 Nail technician's need
- 24 Baserunner's goal
- 25 The small stuff
- 29 Blackbird
- 30 Out of — (grouchy)

Down

- 1 TVA structure
- 2 Inventor Whitney
- 3 Harrison or Netanyahu
- 4 Beyond well-done
- 5 Pinnacle
- 6 Mark in the margin
- 7 Reply (Abbr.)
- 8 Socialites' group
- 9 Pavarotti presentation
- 10 "—, Interrupted"
- 11 Appear
- 16 Yorkshire river
- 19 Asset
- 20 Counterfeit
- 21 Writer Morrison
- 22 Canned
- 23 Worldwide (Abbr.)
- 25 Early period
- 26 Unknown
- 27 Rich Little, e.g.
- 28 Last writer
- 30 Command to Rover
- 33 Beowulf's home
- 34 Leave out
- 36 Coral formation
- 37 Church service
- 38 Last writer
- 39 Antitoxins
- 40 Frosty's DNA?
- 42 What the banker in "Penny Lane" never wears
- 43 — Jima
- 44 Spoonbender
- 45 Snoop Dogg's genre

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-21

CRYPTOQUIP

L N Y B G L A Q K Z H H O A L
K L Y M A P B A O W O P N O M W
J D M W L Z M O P D M W G O I G O K Q.

I D Z W Y P M O A W G O W Z A O.
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF I PURCHASED A COW AT MARKET, I SUPPOSE I WOULD MILK IT FOR ALL IT'S WORTH.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: O equals E

Women: Heed these warning signs

Dear Abby: My brother-in-law, "Fred," is on his fifth marriage. We know it won't be his last. Every time he is courted by his next unsuspecting wife, my husband and I wish we could tell his new fiancée what we know about Fred, but of course, we can't. And they never ask.

The questions we wish these nice women would ask: (1) Ask how many times he has been married. Multiple previous marriages are a big red flag. Don't think you are different from the others. You're not.

(2) If you wonder how he affords the expensive wines, the five-star restaurants and the trips to Europe on the salary that someone in his line of work earns — the answer is he can't afford it.

(3) If he wants to buy a house with you and asks you to buy it

in your name alone, then add his name after you obtain a loan, run for the nearest exit. His credit is bad.

(4) "Went to" a college and "graduated from" a college are two different things. What a shame that someone would even lie about that.

(5) If he hasn't been able to hold a job because he was "smarter than" every boss he ever had, don't count on having his income in your budget.

(6) Are you much younger than he is? Does he try to control your every move? (He likes the young ones because he can no longer fool the older, wiser ladies.)

(7) Have you ever wondered why nothing is his fault? The divorces? The bankruptcies? Think again!

Dear Abby



longer fool the older, wiser ladies.)

Brother-in-law must pitch in at home

Dear Annie: My brother-in-law, "Matt," moved in with us a year ago, after splitting with his wife. Since then, his divorce has been finalized and he has his two kids here every other weekend. My house is not big, and although it gets quite crowded during these weekends, we manage. Matt has been a big help watching our children on the nights that my husband and I work. In exchange, we do not charge him rent or any part of the utilities. Matt gives us some money to cover his grocery bills.

Here is what's getting to me. Matt seems to have a problem putting silverware in the dishwasher. He doesn't pick up anything off the floor that doesn't belong to him. Most nights when I come home from work, my living room is trashed. Matt's room is a mess, and all he does is sit at the computer playing games or watch TV.

What can I do without offending him?

— The Sister-in-Law

Annie's Mailbox



Dear Sister-in-Law: You are doing Matt a tremendous favor by allowing him to live in your home, rent-free. Don't worry about offending him. Tell Matt, with a smile, that he now is a full-fledged member of your immediate family and you expect him to do his share around the house. Make a list of chores for everyone, and insist that each person follow it. Remind them when necessary.

Dear Annie: My husband and I struggled for several years while trying to conceive a child. After many visits to fertility specialists, we decided to adopt a wonderful daughter. Shortly after she became part of our family, I miraculously became pregnant. Our son was born a year later, and another daughter three years after that. We feel blessed.

Our oldest daughter has different coloring than the rest of our family. Perfect strangers are rude

enough to comment on this fact. One woman said, "That one is definitely the mailman's child." Today, an elderly man asked my daughter, now 6, "What happened to your hair?"

Although we have always talked openly about her adoption, I'm not sure my daughter has truly grasped the meaning of all these comments. I thought printing this in your column may help people realize such comments are hurtful to children who already may feel different.

— Loving Mom in Connecticut

Dear Mom: Some people don't put their brains into gear before inserting their foot in their mouths, but they mean no harm. The correct response to such rude, unapologetic type questions is, "Thank you. We think she's simply beautiful." Then smile and walk away.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

Creators Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WEFER

YEVAH

DIYSTUR

YIFFEG

www.jumble.com

Answer: _____

Answer: _____

Answer: _____

Answer: _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: NERVY QUEEN REFUGE DAMASK
Answer: What she told the baker to do on her birthday cake — "FUDGE" THE YEARS

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

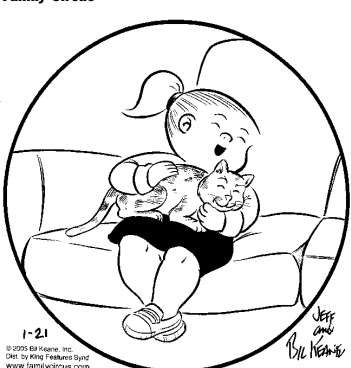


Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

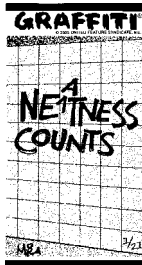
Answer: _____

(Answers tomorrow)

Family Circus



"Kittycat couldn't be nicer. She's purrfect!"

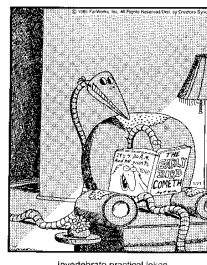


Dennis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side



Non Sequitur



Cowher: Steelers coach all business

COWHER, FROM BACK PAGE

Cowher dismisses the notion his teams were unprepared — read “outcoached” — but it’s evident the Steelers have altered their approach since losing 17-17 to New England in the AFC title game in January 2002.

There’s not a sliver of a chance Cowher would allow a Super Bowl rap video rehearsal all this week, as he did 10 years ago. He also hasn’t said one word about Super Bowl plans since he did in 1992 — a miscalculation the Patriots turned into a motivational tool.

Steelers’ minimalist plan is to focus every bit of attention on that day’s practice or that week’s game, never once daring to look behind or over the horizon.

It’s the old one-game-at-a-time tactic, and it’s worked perfectly for 16 of 17 games.

“I realize the magnitude of the game, but you don’t deviate from what you’ve done to get here and we’re not going to do that,” said Cowher, who decided not to alter practice or meeting times this week.

Cowher adopted the approach during training camp, when he eschewed previous amenities such as a day at the movies or stopping a practice early because he liked what he saw.

“Maybe the last few years we’ve gotten away from some things,” Cowher said.

That the 47-year-old Cowher has been more motivated and more energized hasn’t been lost on his employers, who gave him a contract extension despite last season’s 6-10 record.

“He’s at the stage of his career where he’s made enough money, he’s raised a family, he’s been successful,” team president Art Rooney II said. “The only thing left for him to do is win a championship.”

Doing so this season might be Cowher’s biggest challenge yet.

Belichick is 8-1 in the playoffs — to Cowher’s 8-8, but it’s evident Cowher dislikes all of this talk about the Genius vs. the Jaw.

Successful Belichick’s success in devising successful defensive game plans, Cowher pointedly answered “No” when asked if the Patriots’ schemes are more complex than others in the league.

“To me, it’s not so much [playing] Bill as it is playing the New England Patriots,” Cowher said. “I don’t think it’s a mystic or anything else. You have to understand going in that what you see isn’t always what you get.”

Of course, the same could be said of the Steelers going into championship games.

“We’ve got to seize this opportunity,” Cowher said.

Former coach proud of Falcons’ success

Reeves responsible for assembling much of team playing in NFC title game

BY PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Dan Reeves will be watching the NFC championship game from afar.

He won’t have to call any plays, or manage the clock, or decide which guys to send on the field. All he has to do is make sure his television is switched to the right station.

Even so, the former Atlanta Falcons coach feels a definite sense of pride, knowing he played a role in building the team that is just one victory away from the Super Bowl.

In fact, Reeves gets credit for perhaps the most significant move in franchise history — the trade that landed Pro Bowl quarterback Michael Vick on the eve of the 2001 draft.

“A lot of my coaches are still part of a lot of my players, too,” said Reeves, who coached the Falcons for almost seven seasons and still lives in Atlanta. “I have a good feeling about this football team.”

It’s not his team anymore. Reeves was fired as the 2003 season was winding down, his tenure snuffed out by that most common offense — not enough wins.

The Falcons, who reached the second round of the playoffs in Reeves’ next-to-last year, were doomed when Vick broke his leg in a preseason game. With the team at 3-10, owner Arthur Blank made his move.

Reeves was told he could finish the season of the playoffs in Reeves’ next-to-last year, were doomed when Vick broke his leg in a preseason game. With the team at 3-10, owner Arthur Blank made his move.

Reeves was told he could finish the season of the playoffs in Reeves’ next-to-last year, were doomed when Vick broke his leg in a preseason game. With the team at 3-10, owner Arthur Blank made his move.

Jim Mora was hired as Reeves’ replacement, and the team composed mostly of players brought in by the previous regime. In a sign of respect, the new coach also kept nine member of his predecessor’s staff — including Reeves’ son-in-law, special teams coordinator Mike Tomlin.

“He deserves a tremendous amount of credit for setting the table for us,” Mora said Wednesday. “My whole life, I looked up to him. Anytime I can pick his brain about things that might help the team, I do.”



Former Atlanta Falcons coach Dan Reeves, left, was fired last season, but he remains the only coach to take the team to a Super Bowl and he pulled off the trade on the eve of the 2001 draft that landed Michael Vick (7).

Reeves has called up Mora several times this season, most notably after a 56-10 loss to Kansas City in late October. The ex-coach recounted how the Falcons got whipped by San Francisco early in the ‘98 season, but bounced back to make the Super Bowl for the first time in franchise history.

“I thought we were in position to be one of the elite teams in the league, but the 49ers kicked our butts,” Reeves remembered.

“How the team reacted made me understand and know that we had a special group.”

This team reacted the same way to the Kansas City debacle, winning at Denver the following week to spark a four-game winning streak. The Falcons won the NFC South going away and got the playoffs started with a 47-17 rout of St. Louis last weekend.

Now, it’s on to Philadelphia for Sunday’s NFC title game — and a spot in the Super Bowl.

Belichick: Pats coach regarded as master strategist

BELICHICK, FROM BACK PAGE

Manning’s longest completion gained just 18 yards and he failed to throw a touchdown pass for the first time in his 16 complete games this season.

“I think the person you have to ask is Belichick,” Colts tight end Marcus Pollard said. “What they did [Sunday] was different from what teams have been able to do against us all season.”

Patriots linebacker Mike Vrabel was part of the defense that carried out Belichick’s orders.

“We had a great plan, an unbelievable plan. Our coaches got to go together and came up with some good stuff,” Vrabel said.

“Different looks, stuff [Manning] hadn’t seen before.”

Belichick and his coaches have been going in that direction.

Curtis Martin of the New York Jets led the NFL in rushing but in two games against the Patriots this season, both losses, he totaled only 103 yards on 33 carries with no touchdowns. His longest run covered 9 yards.

“Belichick is like the Bobby Fischer of football,” the running back said. “When you give him guy time to plan for you and prepare for you, he’s going to dissect you. He’s going to take your

whole strategy apart. And no matter what you do, he has an answer for it. It’s why Pittsburgh is going to have a hard time.”

If the Patriots win, Belichick will tie for the best playoff record among head coaches who have been in at least six games at 9-1.

The other one Vince Lombardi, who won the first two Super Bowls with the Green Bay Packers.

But Belichick shrugs off all the accolades, preferring to scrutinize game film and ponder Xs and Os.

He even said that his team has to “kind of start from scratch” in preparing for Pittsburgh because he spent last week and part of the previous week studying the Colts.

Pittsburgh has a much different offensive style than Indianapolis — power running instead of quick passing — but he does know the Steelers all too well from a 34-20 loss in Pittsburgh on Oct. 1.

On Feb. 10 to them again, he can’t imagine fans heaping praise

on him for being a brilliant tactician who designs just the right plays or a wise teacher who motivates his players to stay hungry.

“We’ve just got to go back to work, have a good week of preparation, get as mentally and physically prepared as we possibly can to play the best team in the AFC in their place,” he said.

“If we don’t, I’m sure none of those things will be said next week.”

The Patriots’ loss to Pittsburgh ended their 21-game winning streak. Their only other loss was by one point in Miami.

Still, Belichick shares the blame for the collapse against the Steelers in which the Patriots trailed 21-3 after one quarter, rushed for a grand total of 5 yards and held the ball for only 17:00.

Roethlisberger threw for two touchdowns in the first quarter and completed 18 of 24 passes.

So how could a team that stopped Manning, who set an NFL record with 49 touchdown passes, crumble against a rookie

Reeves isn’t surprised by the Falcons’ success. Last season, after Vick returned to the lineup, they won three of their last four games. While the overall record was still a dismal 5-11, Reeves knew the team could make a run at the playoffs as long as Vick remained healthy.

“You always learn more about your players during adversity than when guys are playing well,” Reeves said. “Most of the guys really gave it everything they had last year. Those same guys are the ones who are playing real well this year.”

Of the 22 players expected to start against the Eagles, 17 are holdovers from the Reeves’ era. Vick is the most prominent of these, of course, but the list also includes Atlanta’s other three Pro Bowl players: tight end Alge Crumpler, defensive end Patrick Kerney and linebacker Keith Brooking.

That’s not to say Reeves would have gotten the same results if the 43-year-old Mora. The new coach is a generation younger and clearly seems to have a better connection with the players.

“I think he’s done a tremendous job,” Reeves said. “The key to being a good head coach is getting a good feel on the pulse of your football team. He’s done that well. He doesn’t dwell on negative things.”

Reeves didn’t attend any games at the Georgia Dome this season, saying it’s easier to watch on television. “I think he didn’t leave on the best of terms with Blank, who took over the franchise in 2002.”

While Reeves regrets that he couldn’t leave on his own terms, he has no reason to be ashamed of the job he did in Atlanta. For at least a few more days, he’s the only coach to take this franchise to a Super Bowl. And he should always be remembered as the coach who took the team to a Super Bowl.

“I have a great deal of pride about leaving this franchise in better shape than when I took over,” Reeves said. “I feel certain they will soon have a Super Bowl parade down Peachtree Street. Very soon.”

quarterback?

“We didn’t do hardly anything well,” Belichick said. “Obviously, I did a terrible job. You get beat 34-13 or whatever it was, you don’t feel very good about your job.”

It was a rare failure for one of the greatest defensive coaches of the past two decades whose considerable offensive skills can be overshadowed.

He was defensive coordinator for the New York Giants when they won the Super Bowls in the 1986 and 1990 seasons. He also worked with the Patriots’ quarterbacks in 2001 — Tom Brady’s first season as starter after quarterbacks coach Dick LeBein died that August. Belichick won his third NFL title that year.

He won another last season and must beat Pittsburgh for a chance at a fifth championship.

So by the time his players return to practice on Wednesday, the coaching wizard will have devised a game plan to help get them to their third Super Bowl in four years.

“We’re really starting a little bit further behind than we normally are,” in preparation, he said, “but that’s just the way it is this time of year so we’ll work through it.”

Linehan leaves Vikings to run Dolphins offense

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Scott Linehan agreed Wednesday to a three-year contract with the Miami Dolphins to be their offensive coordinator, leaving the Minnesota Vikings without one.

In three seasons in Minnesota, Linehan oversaw one of the league's best offenses. The Vikings ranked second in the NFL in 2002, first in 2003 and fourth in 2004 in total yardage.

Though Linehan wouldn't divulge specific terms of his deal, he's believed to be getting a significant raise. Minnesota has one of the lowest-paid coaching staffs in the league.

After interviewing with new Miami coach Nick Saban, Linehan decided the security offered by Dolphins owner Wayne Huizenga was too attractive to pass up. Saban, who led LSU to a co-national championship in 2003, was given a five-year contract.

"He's hired a new coach and given him a very good basis to retool here," Linehan said by phone from Florida, "and they're going to give him time to get it done."

Linehan and his wife, Kristen, have three sons — Matthew, 10, Michael, 8, and Marcus, 4.

Vikings coach Mike Tice, who gave Linehan his first chance to coach in the NFL in 2002, is only under contract through next season. Owner Red McCombs also has the team on the market, and the uncertainty surrounding the franchise was a concern for Linehan.

"There's nothing there that's stable," he said. "Unfortunately that's the business we're in."

Though Miami went an AFC-west 4-12 last season and ranked 29th in the league in total offense, the environment is clearly less volatile.

NFL Briefs

"This is a commitment from the very top all the way down," Linehan said.

Linehan was Saban's first choice for filling the job, but he had to wait until the Vikings' season was over. They lost 27-14 in Philadelphia to the Eagles in Sunday's divisional playoff game.

The work Linehan did as Daunte Culpepper's quarterbacks coach the past two years — as well as his history of developing players at that position in college — was a big reason why he was wanted elsewhere. Linehan canceled an interview with Jacksonville coach Jack Del Rio after accepting the Miami job.

Tice was unavailable for comment, but Linehan indicated that Vikings offensive line coach Steve Loney is a candidate to replace him as coordinator.

Williams, Claret on list of early entries for draft

NEW YORK — Maurice Clarett and Mike Williams can rest easy on their list.

Clarett and Williams were among 49 underclassmen granted early entry into the NFL Draft on Wednesday. Players needed to file paperwork with the league by Jan. 15 and had until Wednesday to remove their names from consideration.

Other prominent names included junior quarterbacks Alex Smith of Utah and Aaron Rodgers of California. Running backs and defensive backs dominated the list, with 11 of each leaving school early.

It's been two long years for Clarett, the talented running back who was suspended before his sophomore season at Ohio State for NCAA violations and never returned. Clarett initially won a ruling to enter the draft last year, but the decision was reversed by an appeals court.

Williams, then a sophomore wide receiver at Southern California, declared for the draft after a lower court ruled in Clarett's favor. After the reversal, he was not allowed to return to the Trojans, so he sat out last season.

The NFL Draft takes place April 23-24.



According to a teammate, Eagles quarterback Donovan McNabb (5) is "playing with a chip on his shoulder." AP

McNabb passes on confidence

BY ROB MAADDI

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Donovan McNabb sat in a dark room with his two dogs and watched film of the Philadelphia Eagles' loss to Carolina in last year's NFC championship game.

"My dogs talked to me and told me to keep my head up, and I think I was all right," McNabb joked.

As the Eagles (14-3) prepare for their fourth consecutive NFC title game against Atlanta (12-5) on Sunday, McNabb certainly doesn't appear to be feeling the pressure of having lost the past three conference championships.

The five-time Pro Bowl quarterback cracked jokes, mimicked reporters and never stopped smiling in a 10-minute news conference Wednesday.

With snow already falling and a possible storm forecast for Philadelphia this weekend, a writer wanted to know how bad weather affects a running quarterback.

"I wouldn't know," McNabb quickly shot back. "You like that one, huh?"

Though he's one of the best quarterbacks in the league, McNabb has never considered himself a running quarterback. In fact, he's always hated the label and prefers sitting in the pocket.

McNabb threw more and ran much less this season, finishing

with a career-low 41 carries — 30 fewer than last season. Having All-Pro wide receiver Terrell Owens for the first 14 games made it easier for McNabb to stay in the pocket and have the best season of his six-year career.

McNabb set a team record with 3,875 yards passing, became the first NFL player to throw for more than 30 touchdowns (31) and less than 10 interceptions (eight), and his passer rating of 104.7 was second in the NFL.

Often criticized for being inaccurate, McNabb drastically improved his completion percentage to 64.0 percent — almost six points higher than his career average — and broke an NFL record by completing 24 consecutive passes over two games.

"I thought Donovan was a great player before, but I think the Miami game last year is kind of where he had it and everything clicked," Eagles coach Andy Reid said, referring to McNabb's performance in a victory at Miami on Dec. 15, 2003. "He was seeing the whole field, he had complete control of the huddle and the defenses that were thrown at him. It has been uphill since then and he has done a great job with it."

McNabb and the rest of his teammates were tired of hearing questions about playing without Owens, who went down with an ankle injury last month and has

an outside chance at playing in the Super Bowl if the Eagles win. They silenced some of those critics with a convincing 27-14 victory over Minnesota in a second-round playoff game.

McNabb led the Eagles to touchdowns on three of the first four possessions against the Vikings, finishing with 286 yards passing and two TDs. Two of his three rushes were kneel-downs at the end of the game.

He is playing with a chip on his shoulder that he wants to be the No. 1 quarterback in the league, "widespread Todd Pinkston said of McNabb. "By him going out and putting up the numbers that he does and getting everyone involved, it comes to a point where you notice it."

A team leader since early in his career, McNabb has an even stronger voice this season. When Owens was injured, McNabb said he's the captain and he'll lead the team to the Super Bowl. Last week, he vowed the Eagles would beat Minnesota.

McNabb's teammates appreciate his combination of toughness and playfulness.

"He brings a lot of confidence and leadership," running back Brian Westbrook said. "He's a good guy to be around. He keeps everything light. We're able to have fun with him out there. At the same time, he's a professional. He's a guy that can get things done at any time."

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Snow possible for title games

The Associated Press

BRITTY! There could be snow at both NFL conference championship games.

Forecasters are calling for gametime temperatures of 20 degrees and a chance of snow showers for Sunday night's Patriots-Steelers AFC championship game. There is a chance of heavier snowfall earlier in the day, but it is expected to stop by kickoff.

The weather could be worse across the state in Philadelphia for the NFC championship game between the Falcons and Eagles in the afternoon. Snow is predict-

ed this weekend, with anywhere from a minimal amount to a major storm.

NFL rules say the field should be covered on the day and night before a game if there is any chance of precipitation. The Steelers usually keep Heinz Field covered, though it was left uncovered during some recent warm days to encourage the grass to grow.

The weather could be a factor in Philadelphia, considering the Falcons play in a dome — although they went to Lambeau Field and beat the Green Bay Packers in snow two years ago in the playoffs.

Bake takes Hewitt to four sets before fading

BY PAUL ALEXANDER

The Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia — Lleyton Hewitt rallied to beat James Blake 4-6, 7-6 (8), 6-0, 6-3 to advance to the third round of the Australian Open on Thursday.

The tense center-court match, which turned after Blake cut his racket hand, was the highlight on a day when Venus Williams got a rigorous workout while opposing China's Peng Shuai, and No. 1-ranked Lindsay Davenport and French Open champion Anastasia Myskina both struggled before winning.

Seventh-seeded Tim Henman of Britain and ninth-seeded David Nalbandian also advanced, while No. 2 Andy Roddick beat Greg Rusedski 6-0, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 in a matchup of the game's fastest servers. There were few long rallies as the two players combined for 23 aces at up to 137 mph. Roddick had 49 winners and only eight unforced errors.

Hewitt lost the first set against Blake, who broke twice in his neck when he ran into a net post during practice last May, then contracted Zoster, an illness that affected his sight and hearing and temporarily paralyzed part of his face. After reaching the fourth round here last January, he missed the other three Grand Slams as his ranking slipped to 76th.

Blake was serving for the second set after breaking the Australian at 5-5. But Hewitt broke back to force a tiebreaker in which both players had set points.

Hewitt converted his third with a sharply angled volley that Blake made a desperate dive for, flicking the ball back while landing on his racket hand and opening a cut between his ring finger and pinkie that required several treatments.

With Hewitt pumped up and shouting encouragement to himself, Blake was never the same and also suffered from several close line calls that went against him.

"I see that as a learning experience," Blake said. "I've been off tour for a while. That's what I missed, being in a tiebreaker with one of the best players in the world. The crowd is into it. You

get chances. You're a little nervous. That's what's fun. And I missed that."

The eighth-seeded Williams had to run constantly from sideline to sideline to stop Peng 6-3, 6-1. She closed out the win with a stinging crosscourt forehand.

Williams lost her opening service game, but broke right back to start a five-game winning streak. That sent her on the way to eliminating the 19-year-old, who upset Myskina at the Sydney International last week.

"Wasn't she a beautiful player?" Williams marveled afterward. "I had no idea who she was."

Peng, ranked 48th, broke Williams twice in the first set. But Williams feasted on Peng's serves, particularly the slow second ones. And while Peng's flat groundstrokes — two-handed from both sides — were few, she had little margin for error.

Davenport earned a 2-6, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Michaela Pastikova, the world's 99th-ranked player, who was entered in her first Grand Slam tournament after 13 failed qualifying attempts.

Myskina, seeded third, berated herself and looked dismayed after many of the 25 errors she committed while ousting No. 114 Tzipora Obzider of Israel 6-4, 6-2.

A sprained ankle and wrist and a strained leg muscle slowed Venus Williams' comeback here last year from a six-month absence with an abdominal strain. Her ranking slipped at one point to 18th.

"Things happen that you can't control yourself," she said. "Sometimes you have to step back."

Davenport made 10 errors as she muddled through the first set in which she looked a bit lethargic. She picked up her play and had only one unforced error in the second set before firing five aces in the third — three in one game.

"I just wasn't ready to be at my very best at the beginning," said Davenport, still a little hoarse from a bout of bronchitis just before the tournament started.

Myskina played 25th-seeded Lisa Raymond, a 6-0, 6-1 winner over Clara Koukova in the third round. Last year, Raymond made the quarterfinals here, upsetting Venus Williams in the way.



James Blake reacts to a missed point during his second-round loss to Lleyton Hewitt in four sets.

Tennis scoreboard

Australian Open

Thursday
At Melbourne Park
Melbourne, Australia
Surface: Hard-Outdoor

Purse: \$14.5 million (Grand Slam)

Singles

Men

Phillip Kohlschütter (Germany, def. Nicolas Pietrangeli, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2)
Bobry Remy (France, def. Andrei Gulyashvili, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2)
Guillermo Canas (22), Argentina, def. Nicolas Pietrangeli, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Radek Stepanek (Czech Republic, def. Jan Hach, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2)

Fernando Gonzalez (23), Chile, def. Igor Andreu, Russia, 6-2, 6-2, 6-2
Juan Ignacio Chela (25), Argentina, def. Gregory Carraz, France, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Juan Carlos Ferrero (31), Spain, def. Carlos Moya, Spain, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Guillermo Coria (22), Argentina, def. Ricardo Mello, Brazil, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Nicola Pietrangeli (20), Argentina, def. Christophe Rochu, Belgium, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2

Dave Nalbandian (2), Argentina, def. Santiago Ventura, Spain, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
David Nalbandian (2), Argentina, def. Santiago Ventura, Spain, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Lleyton Hewitt (3), Australia, def. James Blake, 7-6 (8), 6-0, 6-3
Juan Carlos Ferrero (31), Spain, def. Carlos Moya, Spain, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2

Women

Lisa Raymond (25), United States, def. Klara Koukova, Czech Republic, 6-0, 6-1
Anastasia Myskina (3), Russia, def. Tzipora Obzider, Israel, 6-4, 6-2
Algal Spjærns, United States, def. Tatiana Panatikova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Francesca Schiavone (14), Italy, def. Tzipora Obzider, Israel, 6-4, 6-2
Lindsay Davenport (11), United States, def. Michaela Pastikova, Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-2
Daniela Hantuchova (26), Slovakia, def. Barbara Schett, Austria, 6-4, 6-2
Katerina Srebotnik (13), Slovenia, def. Tathiana Panatikova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Anastasia Myskina (3), Russia, def. Tzipora Obzider, Israel, 6-4, 6-2
Tathiana Panatikova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2

Nicole Pietrangeli, Czech Republic, def. Jelena Kostanic (11), Croatia, 6-4, 6-2
Venus Williams (8), United States, def. Peng Shuai, China, 6-3, 6-1
Svetlana Kuznetsov (2), Russia, def. Elena Dementieva (9), Russia, 6-4, 6-2
Anna Chavazetova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Patryk Remy (23), Switzerland, def. Michaela Pastikova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Elena Dementieva (9), Russia, 6-4, 6-2
Elena Dementieva (9), Russia, 6-4, 6-2
Alena Mokil (10), Australia, def. Alie Nakamura, Japan, 6-4, 6-2

Doubles

Men

Jonas Bjorkman (Sweden, and Max Mirnyi (4), Belarus, def. Bohdan Ulichach and Kevin Kim, def. Mikhail Yuzhny (15), Russia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Irrati Labadeze, Georgia, and Roger Wassen, Netherlands, def. Filipkowski and Leys (11), Czech Republic, 7-6 (4), 6-3
Luis Lobo, Spain, and Andrei Panatikova, def. Julian Knopke, Austria, and Petr Pala (14), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Kavaleri and Olivier Rochu (2), Belgium, def. Yves Allegro, Switzerland, and Michael Kohlmann, Germany, 6-4, 6-2
Lee Hongtaek, South Korea, and Jarkko Nieminen, Finland, def. Arnaud Clement and Paul-Henri Mathieu, France, 6-4, 6-2
Cyril Suk and Pavel Vizner (8), Czech Republic, def. Sadiq Kadir and Shannon Netke, Australia, 6-3, 6-2

Wayne Arthurs (Australia, and Travis Parrott, United States, def. Jim-Thomas Campbell and Kevin Kim, def. Mikhail Yuzhny (15), Russia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Karsten Braasch, Germany, and Jeff Coetzee, South Africa, def. Andrei Panatikova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Karel Beck, Slovakia, and Sargis Sargsian, Armenia, def. Martin Harel, Czech Republic, and Jared Palmer (10), United States, 7-6 (8), 6-3

Wayne Arthurs (Australia, and Travis Parrott, United States, def. Jim-Thomas Campbell and Kevin Kim, def. Mikhail Yuzhny (15), Russia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
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Alex Calatrava and David Ferrer, Spain, def. Jaroslav Levinsky and David Skoch, Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-2, 6-2
Wesley Moodie, Africa, and Nenad Zimonjic, Serbia-Montenegro, def. Feliciano Lopez and Fernando Verdasco, Spain, 6-4, 6-2
Michael Llodra and Fabrice Santoro (6), France, def. Accaputo, Argentina, and Riva Sattari, Russia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Riva Sattari, Russia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Francesco Schiavone and Vince Spadea, United States, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Jordan Kerr, Australia, and Jim Thomas, United States, def. Srebotnik and Michael Tathiana, Czech Republic, 6-2, 6-2, 6-2

Women

Ruxandra Dragomir (16), Romania, and Maureen Drake, Canada, def. Olga Blatnitskaya and Lluise Prusova, Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2
Anabel Medina Garrigues, Spain, 6-4, 6-2
Diana Safir, Russia, def. Nuria Llagostera Vives, Spain, and Galina Voskoboeva, Russia, 6-4, 6-2
Bryanne Stewart and Samantha Stosur, Australia, def. Hsieh Su-wei, Taiwan, and Seiko Okamoto, Japan, 6-3, 6-2
Yulia Beitzinger, Ukraine, and Ipek Senoglu, Turkey, def. Yan Zi and Zheng Jie (12), China, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2

Marion Bartoli, France, and Anna-Lena Groenefeld, Germany, def. Maria Koryukova and Chang Chai-jung, Taiwan, and Rika Fujiwara, Japan, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Silvia Farina, Italy, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Shinobu Asagoe, Japan, and Katarina Srebotnik (14), Slovenia, def. Sophie Ferguson and Iselin Hewitt, Australia, 6-4, 6-2
Caroline Dhenin, France, and Silvija Talaja, Croatia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2

Shinobu Asagoe, Japan, and Katarina Srebotnik (14), Slovenia, def. Sophie Ferguson and Iselin Hewitt, Australia, 6-4, 6-2
Caroline Dhenin, France, and Silvija Talaja, Croatia, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Gisela Dulko, Argentina, and Maria Yegorova (11), Czech Republic, def. Rika Fujiwara, Japan, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Silvia Farina, Italy, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
Anastasia Myskina (3), Russia, and Venus Williams (8), United States, def. Maria Yegorova (11), Czech Republic, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2
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Sides will meet again, but no real progress in NHL dispute

BY TRA PODELL

The Associated Press

A twist in the NHL labor talks seems to have worked — at least for one day.

With Commissioner Gary Bettman and union chief Bob Goodenow out of the picture Wednesday, a group of six men got down to talking.

After several hours in a lounge at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, they decided that discussions should continue.

The bid to jump-start NHL labor negotiations has done just that, spawning a second round of talks in an effort to save the hockey season. Union president Trevor Linden

and NHL board of directors chairman Harley Hotchkiss spoke Wednesday and the sides agreed to meet again Thursday, this time in Toronto.

"We engaged in good dialogue," Linden said.

The session lasted about five hours, including a break to make an announcement negotiating could huddle. It was just the third time the league and players' association have had face-to-face talks since the lockout was imposed Sept. 15.

But the talks did not lead to a regular season being wiped out so far.

NHL chief legal officer Bill Daly joined Hotchkiss, who is a part-owner of the Cal-

gary Flames, and outside counsel Bob Battenman in representing the NHL. Linden, NHLPA senior director Ted Saskin, and outside counsel John McCardam were there for the players.

"The parties had a good, candid dialogue," Daly said.

Participants are likely to be the same for the second day of discussions, except for Hotchkiss who will be attending the funeral of J.R. (Bud) McCaig, another member of the Flames' ownership group who died last week.

The meeting, despite the death of his mother, was held Wednesday.

Bettman and Goodenow, who have should-

ered much of the blame for the lockout lasting so long, are expected to sit out again Thursday. At this point, it doesn't appear that either side is prepared to break the ice and put forth a new proposal.

Linden reached out to the owners and invited Hotchkiss to talk.

The Vancouver Canucks center hoped that by holding general discussions without the two leaders, some of the acrimony could be removed from the negotiating process.

"We credit Trevor Linden's initiative in reaching out to the owners, which was informal, open and professional and which resulted in a constructive exchange of viewpoints," Hotchkiss said.

No. 4 Duke subdues upstart Hurricanes

By STEVEN WINE
The Associated Press

CORAL GABLES, Fla. — The Duke Blue Devils have four perimeter players in their starting lineup and just three recruited scholarship players on their bench. They also have a 14-0 record.

"We're getting to our destination on a side street, not a super-highway," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Duke's game Wednesday against surprising Atlantic Coast Conference newcomer Miami was expected to be an alley fight.

Instead, the Blue Devils built a 19-point lead in the second half and won 92-83.

Junior Sheldon Williams scored a career-high 30 points for the fourth-ranked Blue Devils, who shot 61 percent.

"They shot the ball great," Miami coach Frank Haith said. "They were very sound and didn't make many mistakes."

The Blue Devils have their best record after 14 games since 1991-92, when they won their first 17 games en route to the national championship. They're 4-0 in the ACC.

"We know who we are," Krzyzewski said. "We're not an outstanding team, but we're a good team, and we're trying to get better."

Duke's first visit to Miami since 1988 attracted a sellout crowd of 7,000 to cheer on the Hurricanes, who averaged just 2,545 at home last season. Miami students, historically apathetic about the basketball program, began lining up for tickets five hours before game time. Celebrities Alex Rodriguez and Alonzo Mourning were among those sitting in the front row.

But Duke took the crowd out of the game.

"This was a great win," said Daniel Ewing, who scored 16 points in 40 minutes. "We knew it was going to be a high-energy atmosphere, their fans were going to be into it, and they were going to be ready to play. We followed our game plan pretty well. We



Duke's Sheldon Williams (left), shooting over Miami's Anthony King, scored a career-high 30 points on Wednesday and made 11 of 12 field-goal attempts. Duke (14-0) shot 61 percent from the field.

just executed real well on both ends tonight."

The Hurricanes (12-4, 3-2) had won their past three conference games, but fell behind early and trailed by 19 with 10 minutes left.

"We're just holding a chip on our shoulder now," said Miami senior William Frisby, who tied a career-high with 18 points.

Robert Hite, the Hurricanes' scoring leader with an average of 19 points per game, was held to six points on 2-for-7 shooting. His first points came with 6½ minutes left when Duke led by 15.

Williams went 11-for-12 from the field and 8-for-8 from the free-throw line, and he added seven rebounds in 37 minutes.

"We've gotten the ball to him as much as we can," Ewing said.

"When he has it, pretty much no one can stop him down there one-on-one."

The Blue Devils shot 31-for-51 to finish above 50 percent for the third consecutive game. They made 10 of 21 three-pointers.

"We wanted to change the way we've been starting games," Williams said. "One of the things we wanted to do was get going early." They did. Penetrating inside early, the Blue Devils sank five shots in a row for a 16-10 lead. Miami made six of seven during one stretch and was up 17-16, then cooled off as Duke began to pull away.

Guillermo Diaz had 25 points for Miami.

Anthony Harris added 15, and Anthony King had 10 points and 10 rebounds for the Hurricanes.

Kansas, BC barely remain undefeated

The Associated Press

Kansas and Boston College barely remained unbeaten on Wednesday night.

Second-ranked Kansas hung on for a 59-57 victory when Nebraska's Corey Simms missed an open three-pointer with 2.6 seconds left.

And No. 9 Boston College trailed by six with 2 minutes to go before rallying past Villanova 67-66 on Jared Dudley's go-ahead free throws with 5.5 seconds remaining.

"It just shows the will to win," Dudley said.

At Lawrence, Kan., Wayne Simien scored all 12 of his points in the second half and Kansas (14-0, 4-0 Big 12) edged Nebraska despite making only 13 of 28 free throws and being out rebounded 43-36.

The Cornhuskers (8-6, 2-2) went for the win and not the tie on their final shot. Simms missed a three-pointer with the clock winding down, and Alex Galindo hugged the rebound to his chest as the buzzer sounded.

"We got lucky. He had a wide-open look," Kansas' Michael Lee said. "You can't draw it up any better than that for a game-winning shot."

At Boston, Dudley scored a career-high 36 points — topping his previous best of 24 by halftime — and Boston College (15-0, 4-0 Big East) scored the last seven points of the game to beat Villanova (9-4, 2-3).

The Eagles have played a lot of close games this season, including overtime against Holy Cross, double overtime against Yale and a win over Kent State after a buzzer-beating shot.

"I know we've put ourselves in that situation, and we've had success," coach Al Skinner said. "But we don't want to play that way."

In other Top 25 games Wednesday:

No. 6 North Carolina 77, Clemson 58: At Clemson, S.C., Rashad McCants scored 17 of his 23 points in the second half and North Carolina overcame a sluggish start.

McCants hit consecutive three-pointers to close a 19-7 run that put North Carolina (15-2, 4-1 Atlantic Coast Conference) ahead to stay, 46-34, with 12:07 left.

Point guard Raymond Felton added 11 points and 10 rebounds for the Tar Heels, who had won

Men's Top 25 Roundup

14 straight before falling to Wake Forest on Saturday.

Freshman Cheyenne Moore made four three-pointers and tied Clemson (10-7, 1-4) with a career-high 14 points.

No. 8 Kentucky 53, Mississippi 50: At Oxford, Miss., freshman Rajon Rondo scored 11 of his 13 points in the second half to help Kentucky rally from a 15-point deficit.

Ole Miss (11-7, 2-3 Southeastern Conference) had the ball trailing 51-50 in the final moments, but Kendrick Fox missed a three-pointer with 19 seconds to play and Kentucky's Patrick Sparks hit two free throws to extend the lead.

Londrick Nolen's desperation three-pointer at the buzzer bounced off the rim, giving the Wildcats (13-2, 4-0) their second big comeback win of the season and ninth victory in 10 games. Keleena Azubike had 11 points for Kentucky, but its lowest point total of the season.

No. 14 Louisville 92, East Carolina 41: At Louisville, Ky., reserve guard Brandon Jenkins scored a career-high 14 points and backup forward Otis George had 13 points and 10 rebounds to lead Louisville.

Taquan Dean scored 13 and Juan Palacios had 12 points and 10 rebounds for the Cardinals (15-3, 4-1 Conference USA), who dominated from the start, propelled by sharp three-point shooting and suffocating full-court pressure.

The Pirates (512, 0-5) committed 24 turnovers and shot 26 percent (15 of 58).

No. 20 Cincinnati 80, Charlotte 58: At Cincinnati, Nick Williams scored 19 of his career-high 22 points in the second half, steadying the Bearcats.

Jason Maxiell had 23 points and Eric Hicks grabbed 13 rebounds as Cincinnati (15-2, 4-1 Conference USA) rebounded from a three-point loss to Louisville on Saturday, when the Bearcats blew a 17-point lead because of poor rebounding and free-throw shooting.

Charlotte (12-3, 3-1) had won nine in a row, its longest winning streak in 14 years.

Robbins charged with three counts of attempted murder

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Former Oakland Raiders center Barret Robbins was charged Wednesday with three counts of attempted felony murder, less than a week after being shot during a furious struggle with three police officers investigating a burglary call.

Robbins is best remembered for missing team meetings the night before the 2003 Super Bowl in San Diego. He spent Super Bowl Sunday in a hospital and later acknowledged that he had stopped taking medicine for depression and bipolar disorder.

He was released Saturday after Miami

Sports briefs

Beach police found him inside a woman's restroom in a building housing a pub, a gym and a jewelry store. The pub owner called police after

Robbins forced his way inside the building and refused to leave, a police report said.

Robbins, 31, of Englewood, Colo., growled, snarled and "was heard laughing throughout the attack," the report said.

According to the report, Robbins beat Officer Colin Pflieger to the floor, picked up Detective Mark Schoenfeld and slammed him into one wall and then another, then

grabbed Detective Mike Muley by the face and rammed his head into a corner.

Robbins then grabbed Muley's firearms, and Muley shot Robbins twice in the torso, the report said.

Arrestment was set for Feb. 9.

Rift threatens U.S. World Cup qualifier

NEW YORK — Negotiators from the U.S. Soccer Federation and its union are scheduled to meet with a federal mediator on Thursday in an effort to resolve the dispute threatening to keep the regular players off the field for a World Cup qualifier on Feb. 9 at Trinidad and Tobago.

If there is no agreement by Feb. 1, the USSF says it will replace players.

Rockets sign Rod Strickland

HOUSTON — The Houston Rockets signed veteran point guard Rod Strickland on Wednesday.

A 17-year NBA journeyman, Strickland, 38, as a free agent and didn't play on a team at the start of this season. He spent much of last year with Orlando before forcing his release in March and played the final month of the season with Toronto.

Strickland ranks seventh in NBA history with 7,948 assists.

First baseman Delgado to meet with Mets, Rangers

BY RONALD BLUM
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — After Carlos Delgado meets the Mets, he'll get together with the Rangers.

"We hope that these meetings, along with my discussion yesterday with the Florida Marlins, will make it possible to conclude the negotiations for Carlos in the near future," the first baseman's agent,

David Sloane, said in an e-mail Wednesday.

Delgado was to meet with New York officials on Thursday in Puerto Rico, then have a session with Texas on Friday. Sloane did not mention Baltimore, the fourth team courting Delgado.

Mets pitcher Pedro Martinez has tried to recruit Delgado and is interested in a prominent player mentioned in trade talk this winter.

"I've also talked to Sammy Sosa, and he told me that it would be an honor to play with me in New York," Martinez said, referring to the Chicago Cubs' star outfielder.

In other news Wednesday, Brian Jordan returned to Atlanta, where he starred for the Braves and the NFL's Falcons. The outfielder, who will be 38 by Opening Day, got a \$600,000, one-year contract from Atlanta that allows him to earn an additional \$400,000 in performance and roster bonuses.

"I'm in great shape, back in my football days shape," Jordan said. "I've worked hard to get to this



Carlos Delgado has met with the Florida Marlins and scheduled meetings with the New York Mets and Texas Rangers, but his agent hasn't mentioned the Baltimore Orioles, the other team interested in the free-agent first baseman.

point."

Jordan, slowed by injuries, has not played in more than 66 games since 2002, and he hit .222 with five homers and 23 RBIs for Texas last season.

"The doctors were very, very

positive about his condition overall," Braves General Manager John Schuerholz said. "The whole key is if he stays physically strong and healthy and doesn't get banged up and have a debilitating injury, he's going to be pro-



Brian Jordan, 37, who hasn't played more than 66 games in a season since 2002, agreed to a one-year, \$600,000 contract with the Atlanta Braves on Wednesday.

ductive for us."

Esteban Loaiza agreed to a \$2.9 million, one-year contract with the Washington Nationals, who also gave an \$800,000, one-year deal to reliever Antonio Osuna.

Loaiza went 21-9 with a 2.90 ERA and a league-leading 207 strikeouts for the Chicago White Sox in 2003, was the AL starter in the All-Star Game and finished second in Cy Young Award voting behind Toronto's Roy Halladay. He struggled with his velocity last year, going 9-5 with a 4.86

ERA for the White Sox, then was traded to the New York Yankees and went 1-2 with an 8.50 ERA in 10 regular-season games.

"Of course, he's a gamble," Nationals General Manager Jim Bowden said. "Obviously, if he was coming off the year he had a year ago, we couldn't afford him."

Milwaukee agreed to an \$800,000, one-year contract with free-agent reliever Ricky Bottalico and settled its arbitration case with Brooks Kieschnick in a \$550,000 deal that contains bonuses for pitching and hitting.

Texas agreed to a \$1.1 million contract with right-hander Carlos Almanzar, leaving 37 players in arbitration among the 89 who filed last Friday.

Pitcher Tony Saunders, who retired in 2000 after breaking his left arm for the second time, agreed to a minor league contract with Baltimore. On May 26, 1999, the humerus bone in his left arm broke while he was throwing a pitch in a game at Tampa Bay.

"The last four years, I never really thought about it because of how it ended," he said. "It didn't end where someone told me I wasn't good enough. It ended on a very bad injury. Did I miss the game? Most definitely. But it was never really a thought to come back and pitch again."

Also agreeing to minor league contracts were pitcher Aaron Sele and infielder Ricky Gutierrez (Seattle), pitcher Jose Jimenez (Arizona), infielder Jose Offerman (Philadelphia), third baseman Dean Paladino (Detroit), and infielder Shyne Halter and outfielder Marty Cordova (Tampa Bay).

Owners, players reach Internet agreement

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Baseball players and owners struck an Internet deal Wednesday they hope will expand the sport's presence on the Web.

Major League Baseball and its players' association announced a \$50 million, five-year deal that

gives management's Internet company the players' rights for the development of online games and wireless products.

As part of the deal between the union and Major League Baseball Advanced Media, the union's Web site will be hosted by MLB.com and relaunched as MLBPlayers.com.

Typically, sites such as ESPN and Yahoo license rights to use players' names and uniform numbers from the union. Under the deal, sites will now license those rights from the MLBAM and can package them with video highlights, images of uniforms, team logos and other intellectual properties the league owns.

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SPORTS



Ex-coach Reeves enjoys watching success of team he helped put together, Page 26

Can't win big one?

Cowher gets another crack at beating Patriots' coach, leading Steelers to title

BY ALAN ROBINSON
The Associated Press

For someone saddled with the reputation of not winning the big one, Bill Cowher certainly coaches in a lot of big games. That's why there's extra incentive in Sunday's AFC championship game for one of the most successful coaches to never win a Super Bowl: The man widely considered pro football's best coach is on the opposing sideline.

Cowher, the Steelers' coach since 1992, has won more regular season games and division titles than the Patriots' Bill Belichick — and just as many playoff games. When the two went head-to-head in the same division for four seasons from 1992-95, Cowher won three division titles to Belichick's none.

Amid the one-sided comparisons is the singular statistic that explains why Belichick is the resident wizard among NFL coaches, and Cowher is considered to be merely among the elite.

Super Bowls won: Belichick 2, Cowher 0.

And it's not just winning football's biggest game that's been the problem — Cowher is 0-1 in the Super Bowl — it's getting there.

This is the fifth time since 1995 the Steelers have staged the AFC title game, yet they have won only once and were upset three times as a favorite.

Can't win the big one? Seems the problem has been more like can't-win-the-one-before-the-big-one.

"I want to win a championship," Cowher said, resolutely, aware his career will seem incomplete unless he raises the Lombardi Trophy. "It has been a void that has been there."

Void? It's been a Grand Canyon-sized crater, especially because he is one of only two Steelers coaches in 36 seasons, yet is clearly the least accomplished. Chuck Noll might have won only two playoff games in his final 12 seasons, but he is still the only coach to win four Super Bowls.

Cowher, talking Tuesday, didn't try to rationalize the Steelers' AFC title game upset losses to San Diego (January 1995), Denver (1998) or New England (2002).

"I think we have been prepared to play every game," he said. "When you go into the playoffs, you are playing quality teams and you can't turn the ball over and squander scoring opportunities. Those things have a way of staring you in the face at the end of a football game."

Sounds like a simplistic answer for a complex man — one who trails only Joe Gibbs, Bill Parcells and Mike Holmgren in playoff victories among active coaches, yet is the only one of that group without a Super Bowl title.

SEE COWHER ON PAGE 26

PITTSBURGH

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New England coach Bill Belichick has led the Patriots to Super Bowl victories in two of the past three years, but hasn't yet come up with a plan to stop Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger.

Pittsburgh one more test for Belichick

BY HOWARD ULMAN
The Associated Press

FOXBORO, Mass. — The coaching genius knows how quickly his reputation can be tarnished.

Another loss to the Steelers and Bill Belichick could go from the mastermind who baffled Peyton Manning to the bungler who still can't beat Ben Roethlisberger.

"It's a nice compliment" that some people consider him one of the top coaches in NFL history, the New England coach said Monday.

"I don't think it really means much this week. I don't think anybody cares about that. I'm sure Pittsburgh doesn't care."

Belichick already has won two Super Bowls in three years and led the Patriots to consecutive 14-2 seasons. On Sunday, his reputation grew in a 20-3 playoff victory over the high-scoring Indianapolis Colts and MVP Manning that put New England in Sunday's AFC championship game in Pittsburgh.

SEE BELICHICK ON PAGE 26

Suns move to top of standings as Suns' slide continues; LeBron becomes youngest to record NBA triple-double

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Undefeated No. 4 Duke gives upstart Miami taste of life at top of ACC

Page 29



Hewitt pushed to four sets by Blake before moving on to third round in Australian Open

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